

# The Sun

50¢

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## Registration begins for after school programs

The Glades Boys & Girls Clubs will begin registration of their after school program which begins Aug. 20.

The registration will be at Lake Shore Civic Center for the clubs now at Belle Glade Elem., Glade View Elem. Pioneer Park Elem., Rosenwald Elem. and Lake Shore Civic Center. The cost is \$10 for each child for the school year and includes all after school activities and teacher planning days. The winter, spring, and summer programs require additional fees. Scholarships are available for families demonstrating financial needs.

The five Boys & Girls Club facilities in the Glades are open each school day from 2 to 6 p.m. On non-school days (i.e. teacher planning days, spring or winter break, summer), the clubs are open from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Programs include homework help and tutoring; computer education; sports; game room activities; leadership; and citizenship programs; cultural awareness; and outdoor/environmental education.

For additional information contact the Boys & Girls Clubs at 992-5399 or the General Services Center at 561-683-3287.

## Rosenwald students to register

Registration for all Rosenwald students will be on August 14, 15, and 18 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parent resource classroom.

Parents of kindergarten and new students to Palm Beach County should bring their child's shot records and proof of physical, birth certificate, Social Security card, proof of residence and proof of income (if they are applying for free or reduced lunch.)

Any parents with questions can call the school at 993-4060.

## Survey of homeless to be conducted in Glades

The Palm Beach County Homeless Coalition will conduct a census of all persons who are homeless in Palm Beach County. This count will be performed on two days, August 24 and August 31.

Dr. Andrew Cherry, a professor at Barry University, will direct the census. He has directed numerous censuses of homeless people nationwide.

If you have information on where homeless people may be found, or wish to participate as an enumerator, please contact Phil Anderson at Centro Campesino, 996-3988 or Don Eiten, Director of the Homeless Coalition, at 561-375-6629.

The purpose of this census is to create programs for a shelter, and alcohol and drug treatment, etc. for people who have no home.

## H-2A Educational Forum to be held August 14

There is concern that the Glades may be facing an agricultural labor shortage this season. For this reason, the Department of Labor has planned a seminar to explain exactly what an H-2A order is designed to do. The forum will be Aug. 14, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Belle Glade Jobs & Benefits Office, 557 S.W. 16th Street (Glades Plaza on State Road 715).

The forum will be headed up by Carl Miller with the United States Department of Labor and Linda M. Kinds with the Florida Department of Labor, Wage and Hour, and representatives with Immigration and Naturalization Services.

## Recovery Group meets at Good Shepherd Church of God

A Christ-centered recovery group meets every Monday evening at the Good Shepherd Church of God in Pahokee. Meetings are at 7:30 p.m. and the public is welcome.

The church is located at 1800 Bacon Point Road, Pahokee.

## Lake Level 14.09 feet

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## Two educators vie for open seats on Belle Glade City Commission

By Brenda Bunting  
Editor

Two women have come forward to file for the seats currently open on the Belle Glade City Commission.

Mary S. Kendall, 49, has filed for the seat currently held by Stephen Weeks and Mary Ross Wilkerson, 45, is running against Clay Connell.

Ms. Kendall lives at 324 N.W. Ave. D, Belle Glade and has been a resident since

area director of the Palm Beach County Classroom Teachers Association and is the former secretary for BOSS (Black On the Serious Side). She currently serves as secretary of the Glades Health Survey Board and is co-chair of the Kellogg Foundation's Leadership Development Project for the Glades.

She has two grown daughters, one is a nurse and the other is a teacher and a son who attends Glades Central Community High School. She has three grandchildren.

Ms. Wilkerson has lived in Belle Glade since she was 11 years old. She is employed with the Palm Beach County



Mary S. Kendall



Mary Ross Wilkerson

1952 when she moved to the area as a child from Alabama. This is her first time running for an elected office.

"I think our city is just sleeping, hoping that the impact of federal and state legislation will just go away," she said. "The citizens need better representation and we need to be accountable to them."

Ms. Kendall is a reading facilitator for John Hopkins University in the "Success for All" reading program. She served 10 years as the

School District as a Social Services Facilitator and works part-time with Wackenhut at the South Bay Correctional Facility as a Life Skills Instructor. The former farmworker said she was determined to get an education and get out of the fields. She attended St. See Commission, Page 5

## Chamblee chosen to head up TB study in the Glades

By Brenda Bunting  
Editor

Longtime Glades resident Sandra Chamblee, 57, has been chosen to head up a two year project to study the prevalence of tuberculosis in the Glades.

Mrs. Chamblee was appointed to the paid position on Monday, July 28 by the Glades Health Survey Board. Seven candidates applied for the position and

two were in the final selection last week.

Mrs. Chamblee, who was a member of the board and resigned when chosen to head the project, said, "This project is very important and I really want this to proceed. I believe it is important to have a person locally who knows the area."

Ken Wilson of Fort Pierce,

See, Administrator, Page 5



IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE? These sixth graders from Lake Shore Middle School are graduates of the Voyager Pre-Med Program.

## Making the grade in Pre-Med

By Yvonne Jones  
Staff Writer

It was a warm morning in August. The beautiful auditorium at Glades Central Community High School was air-conditioned perfectly, though, and the only warmth came from the smiles all around.

Friday, August 1, students in kindergarten through sixth grade from Lake Shore Middle School, Palm Springs, Glades View, Pioneer Park and Pahokee

Elementary schools graduated from Pre-Med in a ceremony held in the auditorium.

What? Elementary school kids in Pre-Med? That's right!

These students have been participating in Voyager Expanded Learning, Inc.'s Pre-Med program, where they spent many thrilling hours exploring the wonders of the human body. Voyagers visited a local hospital, learned about opera-

tions and met men and women who save lives every day.

When possible, actual specimens were used to grow bacteria, set broken bones, discover the origin of disease and determine how food is fuel and gives us energy. They learned how the brain works and much, much more.

Most students say they thoroughly enjoyed the adventures during these exciting four weeks.

## School plan would expect more of students

A plan to raise promotion standards and strengthen support for struggling students has been approved by the Palm Beach County School Board.

Part of an overall effort to improve public education in the county, it's called a pupil-progression plan. And it provides a "blueprint and benchmarks for all education programs in our schools," says Superintendent Joan Kowal.

Drafted by a team whose members represent educators, parents and businesses, the plan, approved July 30, calls for a number of changes that include:

- Raising the percentage grades needed to pass in middle and high schools;
- Restricting the use of lower-level courses, such as explorations in mathematics, and requiring higher-level mathematics courses, such as algebra, to meet graduation requirements; and
- Expanding after-school assistance for elementary and middle school students who score below their grade levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

"Raising expectations is a crucial element to improve the performance of our students," Kowal says. "But it's just as impor-

tant to identify students who are struggling and provide them the support they need to succeed."

School districts are required by state law to establish pupil-progression plans and review them on an annual basis. The new plan replaces one that has been in place since 1995.

The revised plan embraces the district's commitment to meeting new statewide standards and implementing literacy and tutorial programs the school board has made a priority.

Other highlights of the plan include:

- Deletion of the option to allow high school students with good attendance to skip semester exams;
- Dropping the use of Social Security numbers to track students - a move to comply with federal law, which says such numbers should be treated with greater confidentiality;
- Establishing a district wide reading assessment system for elementary school students and a reading requirement for middle school students who are reading below their grade level.

## Florida Crystals introduces a new organic sugar in U.S.

Florida Crystals, owned by the Panjuli family who also own Okeelanta and Osceola Sugar mills and a cogeneration plant in the area, has introduced a new organic sugar product. Florida Crystals Organic Sugar becomes the first certified organic sugar produced in the United States.

In order for a product to be certified organic it must be produced using entirely natural methods - no fertilizers, no pesticides, no insecticides, no chemicals of any kind.

John Norris, director of consumer marketing for Florida Crystals, Inc. said, "Florida Crystals natural and organic products were developed out of our commitment to protect the environment while providing consumers with a healthy, more natural alternative to conventional foods. This is a win-win for consumers and the environment."

Florida Crystals Organic Sugar is certified by the Organic

Crop Improvement Association (OCIA). OCIA is the largest organic certification body in the United States, and is known for its stringent certification requirements. Some of these requirements include eliminating the use of chemicals, fertilizers, insecticides, and pesticides for a period of at least three years prior to harvest.

While organic farming is a small part of the company's overall operations, Dr. Peter Rosendahl, vice president of environmental relations for Florida Crystals said that it was an important part of the company's commitment to sustainable agriculture.

"Organic farming is an integral component of a larger sustainable agriculture program we have developed which includes environmental innovations such as renewable biomass energy, wildlife utilization, and a commitment to Everglades restoration."



A SPECIAL FUN DAY was held at Glades Glen in Belle Glade last Saturday. Residents were invited enjoy games, a K-9 demonstration, face painting, music and other activities. Inee Green, 5, of Loxahatchee sits quietly while Lisa Garnett paints a design on her face.

## FISHING WITH WALT REYNOLDS



Walt Reynolds

It has been another hot week on Lake Okechobee. I don't mean the fishing has been hot, just the weather. The fishing, though not cold, has only been warm.

There are still some nice fish being caught early in the morning on topwater. By early, I mean be out there at first light. As soon as the sun hits the water, the bites slow way down. A buzz bait will work as well as smaller bait such as a Chug Bug or Pop R. Work the baits very slow and with long pauses between twitches.

After the sun comes up a plastic worm is about your best bet. June Bug color seems to

work well. If you happen to be out with a storm approaching and you are far enough away that lightning isn't a problem, then you may have some great action just before the rain hits.

This is the time of year I like to grab my Humminbird GPS

and head out to open, deep water. This year however, the fish seem to be holding closer to the grass and in some cases, way back in the grass. A GPS is the neatest piece of high tech fishing gear to come along in many years. When I got my first one, it was almost unheard of and that was only about five years ago. Now, anyone with a well-equipped bass boat has one and maybe even a portable to take with him or her on the road. There is nothing better to get you back to your "hot spot" in open water than a GPS.

To all a good bite...

## Bow hunting course scheduled

Have you ever wondered how the hunter fits into modern-day conservation efforts? Are you concerned about how to handle a bow and arrow? These are just a few of the instructional areas covered in the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's Bow Hunting Course. Students will also receive "hands-on" experience

shooting a bow and arrow on the range. Students are encouraged to bring their own bow hunting equipment.

This course will satisfy the requirement for some other states that require a special bow hunting course before issuing a license.

The next course in Palm Beach County is being offered

at the Gator Guns and Archery Center, 2154 Zip Code Place, West Palm Beach. It will meet on Saturday, August 9, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For further information and pre-registration, contact the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission Office, Hunter Education, at 561-640-6100.

## Lightning and airliners

By Mike Lyons

Lightning flashed through the sky as a 747 made its approach to the Las Vegas Airport. This was no ordinary 747, however. This was Air Force One with President Clinton on board.

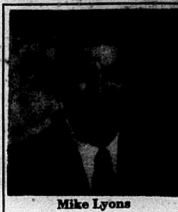
And, this was no ordinary thunderstorm. Dozens of lightning bolts streaked across the sky as heavy rain pelted the tarmac. On at least one occasion, it appeared lightning had actually hit the left wing of the jet.

After a few tense moments, Air Force One made a successful landing. No one was hurt and, it was later determined, lightning had not hit the plane after all.

What would have happened if Air Force One had been struck by lightning? In most cases, nothing at all.

Airliners are generally quite safe during electrical storms. In fact, each commercial airliner is struck by lightning about twice a year. The metal skin of the plane conducts the current along the outside of the aircraft, keeping the occupants safe.

The same principle protects you from lightning in your car. While the rubber tires offer some shielding, it is the metal body on the outside of your



Mike Lyons

vehicle that provides the protection from lightning by offering a safe path for the current to flow to the ground.

Of course, sitting in a plane flying through a thunderstorm is a lot different than sitting in your car. The ride can be very bumpy and, in some cases, hazardous, but lightning is usually not something you have to worry about.

Airliners generally try to avoid any thunderstorms. If your plane is struck by lightning, however, you might see a flash or hear a loud bang, but you will be safe.

The last time lightning caused a U.S. airliner to crash was over 30 years ago. It happened over Elkton, Maryland on December 8, 1963.

A lightning bolt penetrated the reserve fuel tank of the plane creating a fire. The plane crashed, killing 82 people on

board. It was the worst lightning related aviation disaster in United States history.

The accident resulted in a variety of design changes in aircraft to prevent any future accidents. And, with a few exceptions, the changes worked.

In 1995, a lightning bolt struck an MD-80 aircraft as it was pulling away from the boarding gate in Phoenix. None of the 131 passengers on board were injured, but three airline workers outside of the plane needed to be hospitalized.

In 1992, a DC-10 flying from Denver to Minneapolis flew into a thunderstorm, taking a direct hit from a lightning bolt. The plane was able to land safely, but did suffer some damage. Some of the computers were burned up and several rivets on the fuselage were damaged.

In an average year, about 20 million individual lightning bolts strike the ground in the United States. Lightning kills several hundred people and causes extensive property damage, including dozens of forest fires.

Still, when you step on board an airliner, it is one place that is usually quite safe from lightning.

## Glades Central registration information

Classes begin at Glades Central on Wednesday, August 20. All students are to report on the first day of school. Students waiting until after Labor Day will have been absent eight of the 15 days that the State of Florida now allows for a 90 day period. Such absences may result in receiving no credit for work done.

All students will be required to wear student identification badges this year. Come to registration prepared to pay \$1 for the badge. Identification pictures will be taken during the registration process. When a student loses or misplaces the badge, there will be a \$5 fee to have it replaced, so stress upon your child the importance of keeping up with his/her identification badge at all times.

### NINTH GRADE

Parents are asked to accompany their ninth grade students to the Glades Central gymnasium on Tuesday, August 12 between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. to register.

Please bring the following documents with you: Copy of physical taken within the last 12 months, updated immunization record and TB test results.

Parents will be needed to sign several forms to complete the registration process.

### SOPHOMORES,

### JUNIORS AND SENIORS

Registration will be as follows:

Sophomores, Friday, August 15, 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
Juniors, Thursday, August 14, 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.  
Seniors, Thursday, August 14, 8 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

### OPEN REGISTRATION

Students are encouraged to make it to their assigned time of registration. Due to vacations, etc., some may not be able to do so. Therefore, open registration for any who missed their original time will be held Friday, August 15, 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

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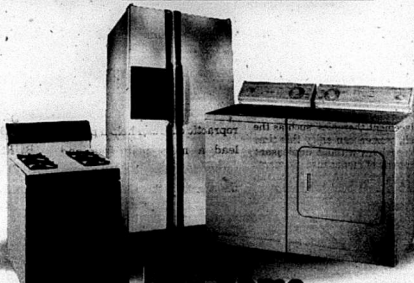
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# HEALTH WATCH

## Appearances can be deceiving

By Paula Swaford, RN



Miss America material...definitely a strikingly beautiful young woman, one who could make all heads turn when she enters a room. I met her while serving on a committee and asked her why she had chosen her particular field of endeavor. She has an advanced degree in the health care field, but would

like to be an elementary school teacher. Anyone who might meet her would automatically think "Wow, she has it all together!" Little did I suspect she has a chronic disease, an inflammatory connective tissue disorder of unknown cause that predominantly occurs in young women. She was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus about four years ago.

SLE (lupus) is a disease that is sometimes difficult to diagnose and even more difficult to find a practitioner to help you treat. The onset of the disease can be acute and begin with a fever which simulates a viral flu-like infection, including muscle aches and a rash. It can also begin in small "doses" over a longer period of time, where one would have episodes of

fever and malaise (generalized weakness); nothing specific to indicate the seriousness of the disease.

Lupus can affect all organs of the body. If diagnosed rather quickly and the initial acute phase is controlled, the long-term prognosis is good. During the course of the disease, there will be periods of remission often years in length, when the person has few manifestations of the disease. Recently, in the past 10 years or so, with special management of the disease, including medication and strict diet controls, as well as an exercise program, the prognosis has improved drastically. In the past, large amounts of steroid drugs were used to control the inflammatory stages of the disease. Now, health care providers are using

more holistic approaches to manage this disease.

Frequent monitoring of body systems involved include having blood work-ups done on a scheduled basis. One of the most important things of course, as with any disease or condition, is the overall attitude of the person affected. Just as with people affected by any chronic disease, a lifestyle adaptation must occur if a relatively healthy existence is a goal. Ignoring the situation, living in a state of denial, constantly finding ways to "cheat" on your diet, medication or exercise program, will ultimately cause the disease to claim control of your life.

This young woman is dealing with her disease in a very positive manner. She watches her diet very closely, eats mainly a

vegetarian diet, drinks plenty of fluids and exercises by walking every day (whether she feels like it or not). By doing this, she has reduced the amount and frequency of medications she has to take in order to maintain herself in a healthy state.

She would love to have a child, but at this time it would be very dangerous to her health and well-being to do so; so, she and her husband wait.

I don't know if you all remember the "Breck Girl" shampoo ads, from the fifties and sixties? Well, this woman is pretty enough to have been a "Breck Girl".

When this disease hit, she initially lost much of her beautiful hair. With her careful management of her illness however, it has grown back. If

nothing else, this experience has taught me a lesson in reality. What sometimes appears "perfect", is often not. Each of us has our own special problem and/or "cross to bear", even though it may not be apparent on the surface...on the part the public sees, so to speak.

In my travels during the past month, I have had the opportunity to meet some fascinating people as well as see some beautiful country, but it's always good to come back home to Clewiston and the Glades. No matter where you go, no matter how much money you possess, no matter who you know, or how influential they are, you can't BUY good health. So, take care of yourself to the best of your abilities.

Until next time...stay informed and stay healthy.

## NEWS

### FOR WOMEN

#### Survey Reveals Treatment Choices Allow Women To Take Control Of Menopause

(NAPS)—According to a recent survey 64 percent of baby boomer women believe life doesn't have to change after menopause.

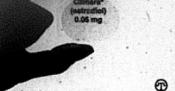
The national survey also found that 74 percent of baby boomers said if they knew more about menopause, they would be less concerned about it. While menopause sets a major physical change in motion, the majority of women feel that life doesn't really have to change at all.

Menopause frequently results in hot flashes and night sweats combined with vaginal burning, itching and dryness. The introduction of estrogen replacement therapy, one alternative to treating these troublesome symptoms, created an opportunity for women to be free of menopausal symptoms, and enjoy life.

For years, doctors have generally prescribed oral estrogen pills, which must be taken every day. This can be cumbersome and invite error. A convenient alternative may be the once-a-week Climara® transdermal patch. Climara® utilizes an advanced delivery system which allows for an even, continuous flow of estrogen directly into the bloodstream, much like the flow the ovaries delivered before menopause. Climara® contains 17-beta estradiol, a natural estrogen derived from soy. In fact, it is the exact same hormone produced by a woman's ovaries before menopause.

Dr. Judi Lee Chervenak, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UMDNJ—New Jersey Medical School notes, "I like the convenience of a once-a-week patch, such as Climara®. Patient compliance may be higher because the patch is very small and virtually invisible. Unlike previous transdermal patches for hormone replacement therapy, the Climara® patch is oval in shape and only one and one-half square inches in total area. Its flexible, transparent surface provides a nearly invisible and comfortable way to relieve unpleasant symptoms of menopause."

With an average life expectancy of 81 years, women today can



A flexible transparent patch provides a nearly invisible and comfortable way to relieve unpleasant symptoms of menopause.

expect to live over one-third of their lives in postmenopause. With convenient, non-invasive hormone replacement therapies, such as the patch, women can enjoy this time in their lives without unpleasant symptoms of menopause. Climara® was developed by Schering AG, Germany and 3M, a leader in adhesive technology, and is distributed by Berlex Laboratories & Forest Laboratories. Climara® is available by prescription in two doses, 0.05 mg and 0.1 mg.

Although estrogen replacement therapy has numerous health benefits, it is not right for every woman. For example, estrogen should not be taken by women who know or suspect that they are pregnant. A woman who has a personal or family history of breast cancer, who has had breast cancer or who has had breast nodules or fibrocystic breast disease should discuss these issues with her healthcare provider before starting treatment. Similarly, a woman who has had endometrial cancer, unusual vaginal bleeding, heart disease or a disorder of the blood vessels should inform her healthcare provider about those conditions. Research is underway to determine the beneficial effects of ERT in cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's.

**Free Brochure**  
For a free copy of *Menopause, Understanding and Coping with the Changes in Your Life*, call 1-800-596-5697.

\* Survey Source Data: 500 women, ages 35-59 participated in a national survey conducted by Berlex Laboratories & Forest Laboratories.

## When do I see the chiropractor?

By Bernard Stern, D.C.



Many people go through their days with minor aches and pains that they learn to live with. Most people feel this is a normal part of aging, but it doesn't have to be. Routine chiropractic care can help a person lead a more pain free and active life. However, most people would rather "suck it up" and spend their hard earned money on more material items.

Unfortunately, there may come a day when the pain gets worse instead of better and medication just doesn't help. This happens to most people when they get into some sort of accident such as a car wreck, fall, sports injury, etc., but it can happen from just bending over to pick up a piece of paper.

The following signals from your body, if they last longer than two to three weeks, should make you seriously consider a visit to the chiropractor:

**HEADACHE PAIN** - Misaligned vertebra in the neck can cause nervousness, high blood pressure, migraine type headaches, tiredness and

dizziness.

**STIFF NECK, SHOULDER AND ARM PAIN** - Pain in the upper arm, difficulty breathing, pain in the lower arm and hands and numbness of the fingers can be the effect of misaligned vertebra in the neck and upper back.

**CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME** - A common cause of hand weakness, numbness and pain. The problem results from encroachment on the median or ulnar nerves, many times by misalignment of the wrist (carpal) bones.

**BURSITIS/ TENDONITIS/ OSTEOARTHRITIS** - Develops when inflammation occurs in the bursa, tendon or other parts of the joints due to injury. This can become a permanent problem if not treated promptly.

**BACK PAIN WITH OR WITHOUT NUMBNESS OF THE LEGS** - People suffering from a herniated disc can have numbness to the toes, pain in the back, and even atrophy (wasting) of the limbs. However, many problems of the lower back and legs such as cramps, lumbago, swollen ankles and knee pains are due to misalignment of the lumbar facet joints and sacroiliac joints which respond extremely well to spinal adjustments.

**KNEE PAIN** - Knee pain, weakness, "locking" or limping can be due to misalignment of

the lumbar spine or of the knee joint itself. This can occur from direct trauma or just daily wear and tear (microtrauma).

Chiropractic care can help these and many other problems by dealing with their cause, generally misalignment (subluxation) of the spine and other joints of the body. When a chiropractor treats a subluxation, he is allowing the nervous system to function properly so that it can heal as nature intended. Should the problem not

respond to chiropractic care, a prompt referral to the appropriate specialist is done to ensure that patients get the care they need and deserve.



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# OPINION PAGE

## Feel strongly about local issues?



INVITES YOU TO  
**SPEAK OUT!**  
996-6636

To voice your opinion on any subject, call *Speak Out* at 996-6636, 24 hours a day. Readers can use this special number to pose questions, voice complaints, express opinions or pat somebody on the back. Unlike letters to the editor, *Speak Out* is designed for anonymous expression of opinions. We edit calls for clarity, brevity, relevance and fairness.

### It's their call

"Who are they? You ask who...the South Bay city officials. How can I get a hold of them? By dialing 996-6751? I don't think so. All I got was a woman who didn't know what was going on. I asked her, 'Are they on vacation?'"  
'No, she said.'  
'Are they out sick?'"  
'No,' she said.  
'Will they be in today?'"  
'No,' she said.

"Well then, when one of them comes in please have them return my phone call." (Hopefully, this century.)

All we need now is one of those automated telephone services to lead us into the new century.

Oh, let's not forget. Did the city official return my phone call? That's right. He didn't."

**Editor's note:** We received a *Speak Out* call concerning a private business and drinking during work hours. Because the type of job required by the employees deals with public safety, we share the caller's concern and did pass the information on to the management at the private business. Thank you for Speaking Out.

### Dead Beat Dads

"This is about dead beat dads. If a man has children by a woman, he makes the woman say the child belongs to someone else and when the (welfare) checks come, he gets the money and buys dope and all she wants out of the check is

a wig to go on her head to go out and party all night.

The children don't get anything...no food, no clothing, they just walk the street and beg for food.

Maybe as taxpayers we should look into this. I would not mind paying for someone to go around and check these things out and maybe we can save some taxpayer money.

Thank you."

### Stop blocking the roads

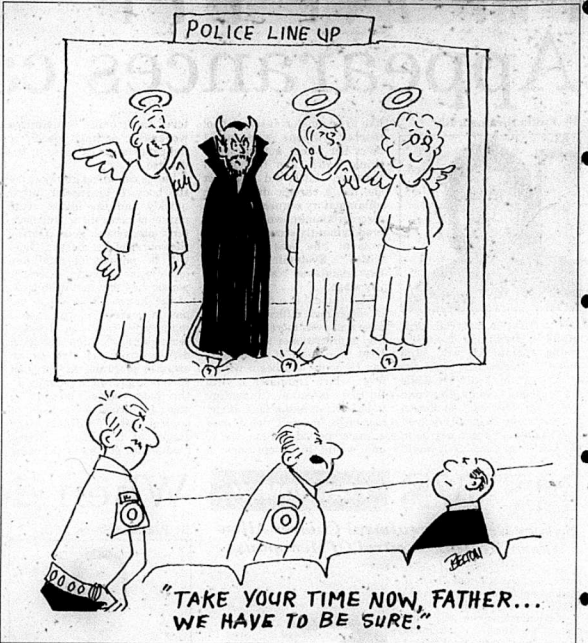
"I'm writing concerning the cars blocking the streets in Belle Glade and Pahokee. I was going down the back road in Pahokee and the Palm Tran was trying to go around a car and the bus almost turned over trying to get around the car.

It's a shame when working people have to put up with things like this. I think this should be looked into."

### More on dead beat dads

I am speaking out about everybody talking about deadbeat dads. What about deadbeat moms? Some women won't even tell who the real father is. Some other men have to take care of someone else's children.

All a woman has to do is get a bus load of babies to get a lot of child support. I think when two people get a child the judge should make them get married and stay together until their children are grown."



## UF economists: Sales fall but consumer confidence hits eight-year high

By Cathy Keen  
University of Florida News  
Gainesville

Florida's consumer confidence index hit an eight-year high in June thanks to a rare combination of healthy wages and low unemployment, but retail sales are reaching a saturation point, University of Florida economists report.

The preliminary consumer confidence index for the month rose 100, gaining three points from May, said economists with UF's Bureau of Economic and Business Research, which conducts the survey.

The last time Florida's index was higher was when it reached 101 in June 1989, a year before the beginning of the last recession.

"Consumer confidence both here in Florida and nationally is through the roof," said Chris McCarthy, the bureau's survey director. "This is an unusual set of circumstances. While wages are up, unemployment, interest rates and inflation are low. Yet the demand for goods has not outpaced the supply, despite what should be a consumer sector flush with money."

"Nationally, auto, home and retail sales are beginning to drop and in Florida, retail sales have slackened, McCarthy said. The decline may be the natural result of

consumers reaching a point where they have already made most of their major purchases, he said.

"During the last few years home and auto sales have been high, and retail sales have been relatively strong," he said. "Perhaps consumers perceived themselves to have reached a certain lifestyle and they just don't need any more for now."

The positive survey results indicate that moderation in Florida's retail sales does not imply worried consumers, added UF economist Dave Denslow. "The softening of sales growth comes from two sources; first, consumers have stepped up on cars and clothes and second, credit card companies are pushing plastic less aggressively," he said.

Perceptions about it being a good time to buy major household items - one of the five indicators upon which the consumer confidence index is based - fell two points this month.

Although men and women both experienced gains in consumer confidence, women experience only a one-point increase compared to two points for men.

Women reflected a greater caution in the long-term national economy and whether now is a good time to buy,

McCarthy said. "As women tend to make more household purchases than men, they may be in a better position to experience signs of an economic downturn," he said.

There were few age differences in the survey responses. While those aged 60 and over are usually somewhat less confident than their younger counterparts, they were generally positive except for perceptions of the long-term national economy and whether it is a good time to buy.

Employed Floridians gave mixed reports of business activity. Fifty-three percent - the same percentage as last month - said business activity was better than at the same time a year ago. But the share who expected extra employees to be hired at their workplace in the next six months fell from 40 percent in May to 35 percent in June.

The Florida Consumer Attitude Survey is conducted every month by the bureau. Respondents are 18 or older and live in households telephoned randomly.

The preliminary index for June was calculated from 824 responses, a response rate of 62 percent. Numbers for prior months are based on about 1,000 responses. The margin of error for the index is almost three points.

## Why does the government want to pick on Uncle Bert

By John R. Smith

Vice President, James Madison Institute

I walked over to my uncle Bert's house the other night and found him in his garage biting nails in half. "Hey Bert, isn't that pretty hard on the old dentures?" (Bert is nearly 80 and has been wearing dentures for some years.)

"Maybe so," he replied, "but I'm so furious with those guys in Washington... He didn't finish his thought; he was busy washing down the last nail with a swallow of beer.

"What'd they do now?" I asked. "They want to make your aunt and me pay higher Medicare premiums just 'cause we have retirement income from \$76,000. They say we're rich. Hell, we aren't rich. Oh, sure, we've got some savings and a few stocks, but we're like that couple in the TV commercial.

"You'd think the government would encourage people to take care of themselves, not penalize them for it."

You know, we took walks instead of vacations, and we shared scotch instead of champagne." In other words we sacrificed to save a few bucks so we could take care of ourselves in our old age. And now the politicians in Washington want to take it away from us! It's just not right...in fact, it's not even legal!"

"What do you mean?"

"You're as bad as those boys in Washington - I guess you haven't read the Constitution either! It says the government has to treat everybody the same. For example the Fourteenth Amendment says government can't deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law." Bert means it's not supposed to discriminate against its own citizens. And making your aunt

See "Uncle Bert," Page 5

THE SUN

417 N.W. 16th Street • Suite 6  
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### A PLEDGE TO OUR READERS

We pledge...

- ✓ To operate this newspaper as a public trust.
- ✓ To help our community become a better place to live and work, through our dedication to conscientious journalism.
- ✓ To provide the information citizens need to make their own decisions about public issues.
- ✓ To report the news with honesty, accuracy, purposeful neutrality, fairness, objectivity, fearlessness and compassion.
- ✓ To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
- ✓ To correct our errors, and to give each correction the prominence it deserves.
- ✓ To provide a right to reply to those about whom we write.
- ✓ To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.



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## Looking back through time



Dressed to kill and no place to go...The Knight sisters are shown in the 1922 picture in Canal Point. Lamonah (Mums) and Onida (Snip) are to the right of their friend, Curly. Their friend to the left is unknown. Lamonah (Mums) Knight was later married to Ray Hawk, Sr. and Onida Knight was married to Frank O'Connell. Both sisters and their husbands lived their adult lives in Canal Point.





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# Military News



## NAVY

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Kyle is one of more than 5,000 Sailors and Marines aboard the ship, which departed its home port of Mayport, FL to lead the USS John F. Kennedy Battle Group.

During the first half of the deployment, Kyles and had the opportunity to visit France, Slovenia and Spain. Although enjoying the diverse cultures was the point in visiting these countries, many of Kyles' shipmates volunteered their time to paint, landscape or repair schools, orphanages and churches. While in Slovenia, USS John F. Kennedy and her crew hosted more than 11,000 visitors aboard the ship.

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response in times of crisis. They serve as a highly visible deterrent to would-be aggressors and, if deterrence fails, offer the most versatile and powerful weapons available.

Kyles joined the Navy in July, 1990.

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Bernarda E. Jones has joined the United States Army under the Delayed Entry Program.

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Jones will report to Fort Knox, Radcliff, KY, for military basic training August 13, 1997. By enlisting, Jones qualified for

a \$6,000 bonus.

She is the granddaughter of Annie J. Arnett of Belle Glade.

## AIR FORCE RESERVE

Winston W. Henry, son of Elizabeth and Neville Henry of South Bay, has been promoted to master sergeant in the 916 Air Refueling Wing, the Air Force Reserve tanker unit at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C.

As a reservist, Henry is a command post specialist working with over 800 reservists. In the civilian world, Henry is a CalXpress Electronic Technician, Transcat/Eil, Charlotte, N.C.

A 1980 graduate of Glades Central Community High School, Henry resides in Spring Lake N.C. with his wife Kimberly, daughter of Quantan Harrell of Belle Glade and Ollie M. Fuller of West Palm Beach.

## AIR FORCE

Senior Airman Denny Hale of South Bay, son of Dennis Bentley of South Bay and



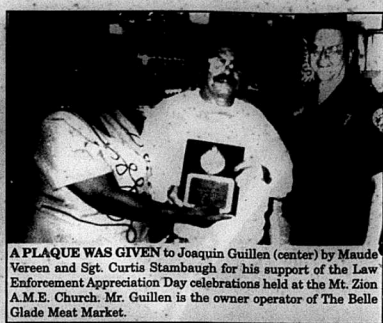
Sr. Airman Denny Hale

Carolyn Hale of Sidney, Ohio, is currently on leave from Massawa, Japan.

Senior Airman Hale is Air Force Intelligence and recently finished a three month tour in Saudi Arabia.

Hale, after completing a four year enlistment, plans to make the Air Force his career.

He is a 1992 graduate from School of CHOICE in Pahokee.



A PLAQUE WAS GIVEN TO Joaquin Guillen (center) by Maude Vereen and Sgt. Curtis Stambaugh for his support of the Law Enforcement Appreciation Day celebrations held at the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. Mr. Guillen is the owner operator of The Belle Glade Meat Market.

## Obituaries

Week of August 7, 1997

George King Zedonek, age 49 of Royal Palm Beach died August 3 at Columbia Palms West Hospital in Loxahatchee.

Mr. Zedonek had been employed by the Palm Beach County School District since 1975 and was a teacher in the Exceptional Student Education Department at Glades Central Community High School at the time of his death.

He is survived by: wife - Betty Jane Heiser Zedonek; mother - Edith King of West Palm Beach; brother - Phillip Zedonek of Lakeland; cousin - Karen Terpac of Miami Beach and; aunt - Louise Ramsey of West Palm Beach.

Memorial services will be held Saturday, August 9, 2 p.m. at the Palms West Funeral Home in Royal Palm Beach. Rev. Michael Woodcock of Our Lady Queen of the Apostles will officiate.

## NEWS FOR VETERANS

### WW II Memorial Moves Closer To Reality

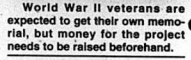
(NAPS)—World War II veterans deserve it and they are expected to get it: a national memorial to call their own.

It started with a simple question. "Why isn't there a national World War II memorial in Washington D.C.?" a veteran and retired postman asked about 10 years ago. Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) didn't know the answer, so she sponsored legislation authorizing the American Battle Monuments Commission to establish a World War II Memorial in Washington.

President Clinton eventually signed the legislation in 1993. After extensive public hearings, the 7.4-acre site that includes the Rainbow Pool in Washington's central core area was selected and approved as the memorial site.

The postman, Roger Durbin, joined President Clinton in sprinkling soil from World War II cemeteries on the site during the dedication in 1995.

More needs to be done. By law, the memorial can't be built until all funds are raised and



World War II veterans are expected to get their own memorial, but money for the project needs to be raised beforehand.

the design is approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

Ten years after Durbin first brought the idea of a national World War II memorial forward, the quest for funds has begun. Another World War II veteran, Senator Bob Dole, is leading the effort to raise the \$100 million needed to build the memorial.

For more information or to donate, write to the American Battle Monuments Commission, 20 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Suite 1205, Washington D.C., 20314-0001. Or call (202) 761-4355.

## NEWS OF HEALTH

### Wonder of Medicine: Hip Replacement

(NAPS)—What some would have called a "miracle" is increasingly common: a new hip that works as well as the old.

The hip belongs to Warren Smock, 53. He didn't let a total hip replacement in 1994 keep him from pursuing a lifetime goal of riding his bicycle across the country. Smock and other cyclists from around the world took a 3,000-mile ride from Los Angeles to Boston, even though a childhood disease had caused Smock's hip socket to deteriorate.

An avid cyclist and founder of the Indiana Bicycle Coalition, Smock visited Indianapolis orthopedic surgeon Dr. Robert Czarkowski to talk about his hip. The surgeon advised and performed a total hip replacement. The diseased bone was replaced with a total hip implant made of titanium alloy and a special polyethylene known as AcCom. The hip was manufactured by Biomet, Inc., a leading supplier of orthopedic implants.

After surgery, Smock, an instructor at Ivy Tech State College in Indianapolis, made remarkable progress. In the next 30 months, he logged over 7,000 miles, enough for a round-trip coast to coast, with a few side trips along the way.

Dr. Czarkowski was not surprised. "Total hip replacement is a highly successful procedure that can eliminate pain and restore

An artificial hip can make a real difference in quality of life for athletes and others.

motion and stability. Clearly, Mr. Smock is an exceptional example of what's possible. We would not recommend such an undertaking to most patients, but most patients are able to pursue everyday activities that would have been impossible without the procedure."

## In memory of...

The following poem was submitted by Shirley Levins Jarriel in memory of her father, Marvin "Pop" Levins, who would have been 90 years old on June 20, 1997 and her mother, Ami Curry Levins, who went to be with him on June 13, 1997.

### TOGETHER AGAIN

Don't weep anymore for me, my precious treasures,  
I'm here with Daddy now, enjoying Heaven's pleasures,  
He looks so handsome and restored.  
He's enjoying farming, his favorite thing,  
I kiss him for you and he loves to hear me sing  
Songs of praise to our Lord.  
You know how I love pretty things and good food -  
Daddy cooks for me and it's still just as good!  
Vegetable and fried cornbread as only he can prepare.  
We always welcomed another one to the table  
Carry on the tradition - cook and share!  
I know you are grieving,  
No time to plan for my leaving.  
But please have no regrets, don't stay in despair.  
I had a wonderful earthly life...  
Ours was a home free of strife...  
It was like Heaven on earth...  
Now the joy of seeing Jesus face to face  
Made it worth everything to finish the race -  
Impossible to tell His word.  
I thank Him for my new body and for my new home -  
This wonderful place where there's no need to roam,  
No need to worry or fret.  
All of the family is here except you.  
Jesus is preparing your mansion, it's true.  
But your work there is not finished yet.  
Everyone here asks when you're coming,  
I tell them, "Soon!" while the Curry Band is strumming  
A song to welcome all of you.  
But wait for the rapture and come together  
Where there's never any stormy weather  
And we'll never have to say goodbye.



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**CHURCH OF GOD**  
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**CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY**  
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**CHURCH OF THE HOLY NATIVITY EPISCOPAL**  
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Rev. Bill Dewey - Pastor

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
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Rev. Don Singleton - Pastor

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
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Rev. Ronald A. Jones

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James A. Brewer - Pastor

**LAKEVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH**  
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Ted Jones - Pastor

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Samuel Montgomery - Pastor

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Rev. Walter Cobb

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Rev. Robert Green

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Rev. C.B. Johnson - Pastor

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**THE INSPIRATIONAL CHURCH OF GOD**  
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Rev. Jay Felt



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# Military News



## NAVY

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She is the granddaughter of Annie J. Arnett of Belle Glade.

## AIR FORCE RESERVE

Winston W. Henry, son of Elizabeth and Neville Henry of South Bay, has been promoted to master sergeant in the 916 Air Refueling Wing, the Air Force Reserve tanker unit at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C.

As a reservist, Henry is a command post specialist working with over 800 reservists. In the civilian world, Henry is a CalXpress Electronic Technician, Transcat/Eil, Charlotte, N.C.

A 1980 graduate of Glades Central Community High School, Henry resides in Spring Lake N.C. with his wife Kimberly, daughter of Quantan Harrell of Belle Glade and Ollie M. Fuller of West Palm Beach.

## AIR FORCE

Senior Airman Denny Hale of South Bay, son of Dennis Bentley of South Bay and



**Sr. Airman Denny Hale**  
Carolyn Hale of Sidney, Ohio, is currently on leave from Masawa, Japan.

Senior Airman Hale is Air Force Intelligence and recently finished a three month tour in Saudi Arabia.

Hale, after completing a four year enlistment, plans to make the Air Force his career.

He is a 1992 graduate from School of CHOICE in Pahokee.



**A PLAQUE WAS GIVEN TO JOAQUIN GUILLEN (center) by Maude Vereen and Sgt. Curtis Stambaugh for his support of the Law Enforcement Appreciation Day celebrations held at the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. Mr. Guillen is the owner operator of The Belle Glade Meat Market.**

## Obituaries

Week of August 7, 1997

**George King Zedonek**, age 48 of Royal Palm Beach died August 3 at Columbia Palms West Hospital in Loxahatchee.

Mr. Zedonek had been employed by the Palm Beach County School District since 1975 and was a teacher in the Exceptional Student Education Department at Glades Central Community High School at the time of his death.

He is survived by wife - Betty Jane Heiser Zedonek; mother - Edith King of West Palm Beach; brother - Phillip Zedonek of Lakeland; cousin - Karen Terpac of Miami Beach; and aunt - Louise Ramsey of West Palm Beach.

Memorial services will be held Saturday, August 9, 2 p.m. at the Palms West Funeral Home in Royal Palm Beach. Rev. Michael Woodcock of Our Lady Queen of the Apostles will officiate.

## NEWS FOR VETERANS

### WW II Memorial Moves Closer To Reality

(NAPS)—World War II veterans deserve it and they are expected to get it: a national memorial to call their own.

It started with a simple question, "Why isn't there a national World War II memorial in Washington D.C.?" a veteran and retired postman asked about 10 years ago.

Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) didn't know the answer, so she sponsored legislation authorizing the American Battle Monuments Commission to establish a World War II Memorial in Washington.

President Clinton eventually signed the legislation in 1993.

After extensive public hearings, the 7.4-acre area that includes the Rainbow Pool in Washington's central core area was selected and approved as the memorial site.

The postman, Roger Durbin, joined President Clinton in sprinkling soil from World War II cemeteries on the site during the dedication in 1995.

More needs to be done.

By law, the memorial can't be built until all funds are raised and



**World War II veterans are expected to get their own memorial, but money for the project needs to be raised beforehand.**

the design is approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

Ten years after Durbin first brought the idea of a national World War II memorial forward, the quest for funds has begun.

Another World War II veteran, Senator Bob Dole, is leading the effort to raise the \$100 million needed to build the memorial.

For more information or to donate, write to the American Battle Monuments Commission, 20 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Suite 1205, Washington D.C. 20314-0001. Or call (202) 761-4355.

## NEWS OF HEALTH

### Wonder of Medicine: Hip Replacement

(NAPS)—What some would have called a "miracle" is increasingly common: a new hip that works as well as the old.

The hip belongs to Warren Smock, 53. He didn't let a total hip replacement in 1994 keep him from pursuing a lifetime goal of riding his bicycle across the country. Smock and other cyclists from around the world took a 3,000-mile ride from Los Angeles to Boston, even though a childhood disease had caused Smock's hip socket to deteriorate.

An avid cyclist and founder of the Indiana Bicycle Coalition, Smock visited Indianapolis orthopedic surgeon Dr. Robert Czarkowski to talk about his hip. The surgeon advised and performed a total hip replacement. The diseased bone was replaced with a total hip implant made of titanium alloy and a special polyethylene known as Acrom. The hip was manufactured by Biomet, Inc., a leading supplier of orthopedic implants.

After surgery, Smock, an instructor at Ivy Tech State College in Indianapolis, made remarkable progress. In the next 30 months, he logged over 7,000 miles, enough for a round-trip coast to coast, with a few side trips along the way.

Dr. Czarkowski was not surprised. "Total hip replacement is a highly successful procedure that can eliminate pain and restore



**An artificial hip can make a real difference in quality of life for athletes and others.**

motion and stability. Clearly, Mr. Smock is an exceptional example of what's possible. We would not recommend such an undertaking to most patients, but most patients are able to pursue everyday activities that would have been impossible without the procedure.

## CHURCH DIRECTORY

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515 Palm Beach Blvd.  
Rev. Jon Ford

## In memory of...

The following poem was submitted by Shirley Levins Jarriel in memory of her father, Marvin "Pop" Levins, who would have been 90 years old on June 20, 1997 and her mother, Ami Curry Levins, who went to be with him on June 13, 1997.

### TOGETHER AGAIN

Don't weep anymore for me, my precious treasures,  
I'm here with Daddy now, enjoying Heaven's pleasures,  
He looks so handsome and restored.  
He's enjoying farming, his favorite thing,  
I kiss him for you and he loves to hear me sing  
Songs of praise to our Lord.  
You know how I love pretty things and good food -  
Daddy cooks for me and it's still just as good!  
Vegetable and fried cornbread as only he can prepare.  
We always welcomed another one to the table  
Carry on the tradition - cook and share!  
I know you are grieving,  
No time to plan for my leaving.  
But please have no regrets, don't stay in despair.  
I had a wonderful earthly life...  
Ours was a home free of strife...  
It was like Heaven on earth.  
Now the joy of seeing Jesus face to face  
Made it worth everything to finish the race -  
Impossible to tell His worth.  
I thank Him for my new body and for my new home -  
This wonderful place where there's no need to roam,  
No need to worry or fret.  
All of the family is here except you.  
Jesus is preparing your mansion; it's true.  
But your work there is not finished yet.  
Everyone here asks when you're coming,  
I tell them, "Soon!" while the Curry Band is strumming  
A song to welcome all of you.  
But wait for the rapture and come together  
Where there's never any stormy weather  
And we'll never have to say goodbye.



## The Shepherd's School

A ministry of Good Shepherd Church of God

**School Begins August 18**

Registration/Book Fee	\$250
Tuition	
K-4, K-5	\$2,150
Grades 1 - 6	\$2,250
Grades 7 - 9	\$2,500

A Beka Curriculum  
Transportation available  
Call 924-9578 or 924-7284  
1800 Bacon Point Road, Pahokee

We wish to thank all of our friends and neighbors for all the food, cards, prayers and visits at the time of our sorrow.

**Betty Gressinger and Family**



# SUBWAY

## Grand Opening Celebration

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Come and see us at our  
newly remodeled **Town  
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featuring our bright new

# SUBWAY

(Hours 6 am to 9 pm)

Come and join us Friday, August 8th  
and Saturday, August 9th for the  
Grand Opening Festivities; register  
for free gifts and take advantage of  
low, low prices.



**New Bethel to offer  
Vacation Bible School**  
New Bethel Baptist Church  
members are hosting Vacation  
Bible School the week of Aug.  
11 through Aug. 15 from 5 to  
7:30 p.m.  
Pastor R.F. Hairston, III,

invites adults and children to  
attend. Volunteers are needed  
to help conduct the program.

The schedule will include a  
devotional program, singing  
and scripture reciting. There  
will be class sessions, artistic  
creations, outdoor activities,  
music and refreshments. The  
event will close with a special  
program on Sunday, Aug. 17 at  
9:30 a.m. during the Sunday  
School worship services.

Adults who would like to  
help with the Vacation Bible  
School program can contact  
Aurie Williams.

#### Registration informa- tion for Glade View

Registration for pre-kind-  
ergarten and kindergarten stu-  
dents at Glade View Eleme-  
ntary School will be held August  
12 and 13 in the cafeteria from  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Parents should bring their  
child's proof of residency, shot  
record, birth certificate and  
proof of a physical with TB  
results.

#### Back to school fun day at Pioneer Park

Men on the Serious Side

(M.O.S.S.) are hosting their  
third annual Back-To-School  
Fun Day on Aug. 23 from 10  
a.m. to 5 p.m. at Pioneer Park  
on State Road 715, Belle  
Glade.

School supplies will be given  
away to needy children and  
there will be food, drinks and  
games. For more information,  
call Jeffery Henry at 996-8464  
or Miek Cromer at 996-7849.

#### School registration begins!

Sixth grade students at Lake  
Shore Middle School will have

orientation and registration on  
Thursday, Aug. 14 from 5:30 to  
7 p.m.

The event will include a pro-  
gram at 7 p.m. at the Dolly  
Hand Cultural Arts Center.  
Schedules for the 1997-98  
school year will be handed out  
and refreshments will be  
served.

Parents needing information  
about registration require-  
ments should call the school at  
993-4046.

#### Class of 1978 needs to find 63 members

Sixty-three members of the  
Pahokee High School graduat-  
ing Class of 1978 have still not  
been located, according to  
Diane Freeman, one of the  
reunion organizers.

Anyone with information on  
former classmates can call  
Diane Freeman at 924-2867 or  
Teresa Byrnes at 924-2006.

#### PBCC registration under way

Registration for fall term  
classes at Palm Beach Commu-  
nity College is currently under  
way and runs through August  
25. Classes are scheduled to  
begin August 25.

For further information, con-  
tact Palm Beach Community  
College's Glades Campus at  
992-3055.

The college will be closed  
Monday, Sept. 1 in observance  
of Labor Day. The college will  
re-open Tuesday, September 2.

#### Everglades Regional offers bereavement support group

A Bereavement Support  
Group meets weekly at Ever-  
glades Regional Medical Cen-  
ter in Pahokee.

For more information call  
Sandy Choate at 924-5201,  
extension 5142.

#### Bayfest '97 committee meetings

The Bayfest '97 committee  
meets the first and third Tues-  
day of the month at South Bay  
City Hall.

Chairperson Miranda Smith  
encourages any South Bay res-  
idents who would like to par-  
ticipate to attend the meetings.  
Bayfest '97 will be held Octo-  
ber 25. For additional informa-  
tion, residents can call South  
Bay City Hall at 996-6751.

#### Home repairs offered to the needy

Life Builders, a Men's Min-  
istry, is offering repairs to the  
needy. If anyone has a home or  
car that needs repair and they  
are unable to do so, please call  
924-7284 or 996-0508. Life  
Builders says this service is  
especially offered to widowed  
women in the Glades who are  
unable to do this type of work  
and are in need of these ser-  
vices.

#### Bereavement Support Group offered

Hospice of Palm Beach Coun-  
ty is offering bereavement sup-  
port for local residents. Anyone  
who is having a difficult time  
dealing with the death of an  
important person in their life,  
struggling with loneliness and  
a changing social role, is invited  
to attend.

The support group meets  
every Tuesday afternoon from  
4 to 5 p.m. at the Golden  
Glades Hospice Office, located  
at 125 S.E. Avenue E, Belle  
Glade (behind insurance com-  
pany/Children's Home Society).  
Parking is available at Bank of  
Belle Glade.

For further information call  
996-1285.

#### Recovery Group meets at Good Shepherd

A Christ-centered recovery  
group meets every Monday  
evening at the Good Shepherd  
Church of God in Pahokee.  
Meetings are at 7:30 p.m. and  
the public is welcome.

The church is located at 1800  
Bacom Point Road, Pahokee.

#### Children welcome

Lutheran Ministries of Flori-  
da, Inc. PEPP Head Start, is  
recruiting and accepting appli-  
cations for three and four year  
old children.

All are welcome, including  
children with disabilities and  
there are no fees. The center is  
located at 200 S.W. 9th Street,  
Belle Glade. For more infor-  
mation, call 996-1718. Contact  
persons are Barbara Green or  
Tammy Kyles.

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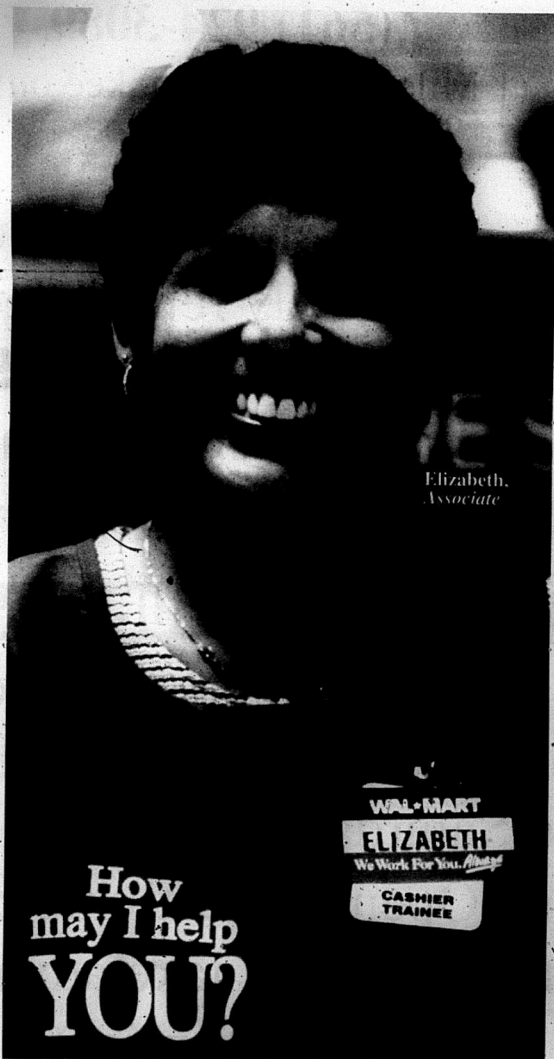
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Elizabeth,  
Associate

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may I help  
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## Summer bass action heats up on Lake Okeechobee

A lot of anglers are missing a great bass fishing opportunity when they write off Lake Okeechobee for the summer, according to the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission officers.

If you know how to go about it, and where to go, fishing Lake Okeechobee in the summer can be highly productive, said Don Fox, fishery biologist with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Many anglers are limiting it, and it's not uncommon to get eight and nine pound bass, according to Fox, who has monitored the Lake Okeechobee fishery resource for the last 15 years.

One reason is fishing pressure drops dramatically once

hot weather sets in. Fox conservatively estimates that the decline is around 75 percent. That means the summer bass angler is facing less competition from other fishermen.

"By June everybody's gone," Fox said. "You go out on the lake and you don't see another soul. You really have the lake to yourself. And, the bass are out there waiting to be caught."

Fox advises summer anglers to fish early or fish late. That's when the bass action peaks. Try wetting a line between daybreak and around 9:30 a.m., or wait until 5 or 6 p.m. that night. A good place to work your lure is where flowing water enters the lake, including the mouth of the

Kissimmee River, Indian Prairie, and Harney Pound - all on the north side of the lake.

"The mouth of the Kissimmee River is one of the best places to try," Fox said. "You'll find the bass schooling right at the drop-off of the sand bars. Anglers are just rippin' up the bass."

"The fish run between two and three pounds, and are feeding on shad," Fox said. "The best bet is to use a deep-diving crankbait like the Rat-lettrap."

In other parts of the lake, Fox suggests anglers look for vegetation, especially bullrush, a prime habitat for bass. He suggests plastic worms fished at the edge of bullrush near deep water.



**STAYING WITHIN THE LINES...**Kianga Hanif helps children paint numbers and designs on large sheets of paper at a fun day activity held Saturday at Glades Glen in Belle Glade.



**SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES...**Cooks Alma Montgomery and Felecia Scott prepare chicken for residents and guests at Saturday's fun day at Glades Glen.

## You can make a difference in the life of a deserving local child.



Take Stock in Children is truly a partnership between you and a local child. We will use 100% of your contribution to sponsor a deserving, local child from a low-income family who wants to continue their education beyond high school. There are even opportunities for you to become a personal mentor to a child your contribution sponsors.

And 100% commitment is expected from the child: excellent grades, hard work, even a contract to stay drug- and crime-free. If they meet all these requirements, they will receive a scholarship and a caring adult mentor. It's going to be hard work for them; for you it's as easy as filling out this form or calling 1-800-464-6675.

Yes, I want to sponsor a local child.

Please send me my scholar's photograph and biography.

- ☐ \$30 per month      ☐ Please accept my gift of \$  
☐ \$360 per year      ☐ Please send me more information on becoming a mentor.

☐ Payment enclosed. (Make check payable to Take Stock in Children.)

☐ Please charge to my credit card: ☐ Mastercard    ☐ Visa

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Signature

Name

Address

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State

Zip

Telephone Number



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Bird's nest soup is made from the lining of swifs' nests, a sort of jelly secreted by the birds' well-developed salivary glands. Since the nests are found on steep cliffs, the soup is very expensive and served only at special feasts.

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4DOOR  
Auto, air, much more  
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'95 CHEVY S10 PICKUP  
Green auto, air &  
much more  
**\$8,997**

'93 ISUZU RODEO 4x4  
4DOOR  
Low miles, clean  
**\$11,797**

### 1996 CHEVY CAVALIER 4 DOOR

Automatic, air conditioning and more!

**\$10,997**

### 1995 CAMARO Z-28 COUPE

Loaded with T-tops.

**\$15,491**

'96 MAZDA B-3000  
Super cab, auto, V6,  
AC, low miles  
**\$15,995**

'95 CHEVY ASTRO  
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Loaded, dual AC  
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'96 CHEVY LUMINA 4DR  
V6 AT, air & more,  
Blue  
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'95 FORD T-BIRD CPE LX  
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'94 CHEVY C1500 P/U  
EXTENDED CAB  
Sportside Silverado  
Teal, loaded  
**\$16,797**

'96 GEO PRIZM  
Auto, clean, 1 owner,  
AC, dual airbags  
**\$11,495**

'93 CHRYSLER TOWN &  
COUNTRY VAN  
V6, loaded, low miles,  
clean  
**\$12,997**

'81 CHEVY GEO SPT VAN  
Auto, air, excellent  
condition  
**\$2,997**

### 1995 CHEVY S-10 BLAZER

V6, 4dr, LS white, clean!

**\$15,497**

'90 FORD BRONCO  
V8, loaded, clean, auto  
**\$7,497**

'97 CHEVY S-10 EXT  
CAB PICKUP  
3dr, 1,900 miles, like  
new  
**\$14,988**

'97 CHEVY CAVALIER  
4dr, AC, auto, great  
Red!  
**\$11,495**

'95 CHEVY CAVALIER  
2DR  
Auto, AC & cassette  
**\$8,488**

'93 CHEVY S10 PICKUP  
Black cherry  
& ready to go  
**\$6,497**

'95 FORD RANGER  
Super Cab, AC, full  
power, auto  
**\$12,995**

'96 PONTIAC SUNFIRE  
SE 4DOOR  
Auto, air & more  
**\$10,997**

'96 CHEVY TAHOE 4DR  
Loaded, cherry, super  
clean  
**\$25,997**

### 1996 CHEVROLET CORSIKA'S

Some with V6 engine, power windows,  
locks, tilt and cruise. From:

**\$7,988**

### 1996 CHEVY MONTE CARLO LS

Air conditioning, full power, aluminum wheels  
leather, red!

**\$14,995**

### 1997 FORD F-150 X-CAB XLT P/U

V8, auto, loaded, clean 1-owner!

**\$19,976**

'95 MITSUBISHI  
MIRAGE 4DR  
Auto, air & more, blue  
**\$8,997**

'95 CHEVY S10  
EXTENDED CAB  
Red, super clean  
**\$9,997**

'94 TOYOTA DX 4x4 P/U  
Super clean, low miles  
**\$12,997**



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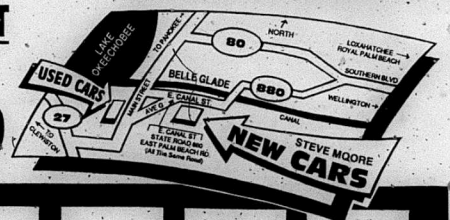
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ALL VEHICLE PRICES PLUS TAX AND TAG.



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MOORE** of  
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# Glades Track Club scores big in Baton Rouge

Members of the Glades Track Club competed in the USA Track & Field Junior Olympic National Championships at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana July 22 through 27.

**Highlights are:**  
**ANITA PERKINS**, age 11 from Belle Glade, competed in the Midget Age Group, 11 & 12 years old.

**Pentathlon - National Champion and State Record,**  
**80 meter hurdles - 13.43 - 1st place,**  
**shot put - 24'5" - 7th place,**  
**high jump - 4'7.25" - 1st place,**  
**long jump - 16'5.25" - 1st place,**  
**800 meter run - 2:31.99 - 1st place,**  
**total points - 3165 (91 points from national record.)**  
Anita broke Jerkita

McClorin's (also a member of the Glades Track Club) state record of 3134 points. She is the first female Track & Field athlete from Palm Beach County to win three national gold medals in one year: Youth Nationals Pentathlon, Youth Nationals High Jump and Junior Olympic Nationals Pentathlon.

**GENEEKA MORRIS**, age 10 from Belle Glade, competed in the Bantam Age Group, 9 & 10 years old.  
**•high jump - 4'1.25" - 4th place,**  
**•triathlon - 6th place medalist,**  
**shot put - 19'11" - 9th place,**  
**high jump - 3'9.75" - 3rd place,**  
**200 meter dash - 31.07 - 6th place,**  
**total points - 952**  
**•shot put - 20'2.25" - 15th**

place.  
Geneeka has won four medals at national meets this year, one each for 1st, 2nd, 4th and 6th places.

**KRISTEN WHITE**, age 16 from Wellington, competed in the Intermediate Age Group, 15 & 16 years old.

**•discus - 112'8" - 9th place,**  
**•javelin - 87'2.5" - 18th place.**

**SOILA KONCHELLAH**, age 9 from Belle Glade, competed in the Bantam Age Group.

**•high jump - 37.5" - 15th place,**  
**•1500 meter run - 5:50.71 - 15th place.**

Soila and Geneeka together were awarded the 3rd place trophy for the team competition at the Youth Nationals that took place during the first week of July.



**BURNING UP THE TRACK AND FIELD...**Members of the Glades Track Club did well in competition in Baton Rouge. Pictured from left to right are: (back) Assistant Coach Dave Brannan, Kristin White and Coach Mike White. (front) Soila Konchellah, Anita Perkins and Geneeka Morris.

## EPA releases results of state/EPA initiative

The U.S. EPA recently announced the results of a nationwide state/EPA enforcement initiative aimed at identifying and correcting violations of state and EPA regulations requiring the use of approved leak detection methods at underground storage tank (UST) facilities.

There are about one million federally regulated USTs in use in the United States. Over the past nine years, more than 321,000 UST releases have been confirmed. The EPA estimates that about 60 percent of these releases have affected groundwater, the source of drinking water for half of all Americans. States have reported that USTs are the most common source of groundwater contamination and that petro-

leum is the most common contaminant.

During May 1997, states and the EPA inspected 10,050 facilities, including gasoline stations and truck and bus fleet refueling facilities. States inspected 9,311 facilities and the EPA inspected 739. A total of 3,192 facilities were found in violation of release detection requirements.

Most of the facilities inspected are privately owned, but some are owned by federal, state or local government agencies. In most cases, the owners were not immediately penalized but are expected to take action to install or perform release detection and keep records in accordance with state and federal requirements. In approximately 400 cases,

however, states and the EPA proposed or collected fines ranging from \$50 to \$300,000. The largest fines were assessed where owners had a history of noncompliance or where violations posed significant threats to health and the environment. The national total of fines proposed or collected by states and the EPA was more than one million dollars.

During the May inspections, inspectors also reminded owners and operators of USTs installed before December 1986 that they have less than two years remaining in which to comply with requirements for spill, overflow and corrosion protection.

These requirements, designed to prevent future leaks, will take effect in December

1998, except in a few states where they are already in effect. (USTs installed after December 1986 had to meet these requirements when they were installed.)

Owners and operators of the older USTs will need to replace or upgrade their tanks to meet these requirements, or close them properly. The EPA recently announced that the Agency will not extend the December 1998 deadline. The 1998 requirements are a key element in the ongoing state/EPA effort to prevent groundwater contamination.

For more information, please call Irv Auerbach (EPA) at 703-603-7139, Debbie Rutherford (EPA) at 703-603-7171 or your state UST program contact at 904-488-3935.

## The Sun

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENT INSERTION ORDER

Announcement  
Yard Sales  
Legal Services  
Merchandise  
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and more!  
Whatever  
you're  
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you'll find  
success  
in the  
Classifieds.

For your Classified Ad, please fill out the form below and return it with your check to:

**The Sun**  
P.O. Box 2226  
Belle Glade, FL 33430  
For more information  
(561) 996-4404

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please run the following ad -

Number of words \_\_\_\_\_ Insert # \_\_\_\_\_ Times  
\$7.00 for the 1st 10 words. Each Additional  
word costs 20¢. ALL ADS MUST BE PAID  
IN ADVANCE. DEADLINE IS MONDAY  
3 PM. FOR THE FOLLOWING THURSDAY  
EDITION. Return this coupon with pay-  
ment. Your cancelled check is your receipt.  
Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Pahokee High registration

Registration will take place on Thursday, August 14, from noon until 6 p.m.

Seventh and eighth graders will register in the cafeteria, ninth through 12th graders will register in the gymnasium. Seniors who are 18 years-old may register themselves with proof of age.

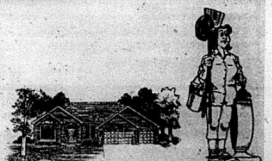
Parent orientation sessions will be held at 1 and 5 p.m. All first time ninth graders and students new to PHS must present physical and immunization records, including TB results. All new seventh graders must comply with new requirements.

**Advertise in The Sun**  
For display ads, call Penny -  
For classified ads, call Yvonne  
at 561-996-4404.

# Classifieds

**FREE AD: Miscellaneous items for sale under \$2000. For details, call Yvonne at 561-996-4404.**

**SPECIAL: Run your ad four consecutive weeks, and the last two weeks are half price! Call for info.**



### Autos For Sale

**SEIZED CARS FROM \$175.** Porches, Cadillac, Chevys, BMWs, Corvettes. Also, Jeeps, 4WDs. Your Ave. Toll-free, 1-800-218-9000, ext. A9567 for amazing listings. 8/28

**'92 BUICK ROADMASTER sedan.** Excellent condition. \$10,500. 561-1076. 8/7

**CARS FOR \$100 or best offer.** Auctioned locally by IRS, DEA, FBI, 4x4's, RV's, Boats, Computers & more. Call Toll Free 24 hrs, 7 days. 1-800-972-5213 ext. 470. FCAN 8/7

**SEIZED CARS FROM \$150.** Jaguar, Honda, Mercedes, BMW, Porsche, Corvette, 4x4's, Trucks and more. Local sales listing. Toll free 1-800-689-2292 ext. A-4000. FCAN 8/7

### Business Opportunities

**I NEED HELP! OVERWHELMED!** Will help you get started! Earn \$5-10K per month. Fantastic support! No selling. NO MLM. 1 min. message. 1-800-322-6169 x-2613. FCAN 8/7

**LEARN WHAT YOUR BOSS DOESN'T** want you to know! BE YOUR OWN BOSS! Free insider report tells how. No selling! No investment! Call 1-800-792-4553. FCAN 8/7

**LOCAL CANDY ROUTE.** 30 Vending Machines. Earn apr. \$800.00/day. All for \$9,995. Call 1-800-999-VEND. FCAN 8/7

**AMAZING OPPORTUNITY MCI** Pre-paid calling card routes. Great locations to choose from. Just \$3,250 gets you started. High. Weekly Potential. 1-800-700-7177 24 hours. FCAN 8/7

### Business Services

**STEVE'S MOWING SERVICE.** Local. acreage and bush hog. Call (407)996-9527. 8/7

**PRESSURE CLEANING Residential & Commercial.** Less expensive than renting. Single walls \$25.00, double walls \$55.00, sheds \$5.00 each. Belle Glade (561) 993-4910, Clewiston (941) 980-4880. 8/7

### Homes For Sale

**LARGE 3 BR/2 BA HOME** on almost 1 full acre. Outskirts of South Bay. Beautiful lawn, fruit trees. Many extras. Must see. Call 941-649-4951 after 4 p.m. 8/7

**FORCLOSED GOVERNMENT HOMES AND PROPERTIES.** Seized & forfeited, ordered to be sold. Penalties on the dollar. Call Mon-Fri 8 AM-7PM. Sun 12-5. 1-800-492-9301 Ext. 3500. FCAN 8/7

**3BR, 1BA WOOD HOUSE,** FHA approved. 996-6266. 8/7

**GOVERNMENT FORECLOSED HOMES,** pennies on 1¢ Repcos, VA, HUD, Sheriff sales. No money down government loans available now. Local listings. Toll free 1-800-669-2292 ext. H-4000. FCAN 8/7

### Employment

**ATTN: LPN's AND RN's!** Become an RN or BSN graduate and increase your income without going back to school! To schedule your interview in WEST PALM BEACH, Call Diane Baskin at AUG 10/1-800-737-2222. 8/7

**JOB LINE:** Hendry Regional Medical Center. For employment inquiries, call 941-902-3085. 8/7

**CABIN DRY CLEANERS** needs experienced clothes pressor. Call Randy @ 996-2054. 8/7

**CDL DRIVER** with class A driver's license. 561-848-0333. 8/14

**AFTER HOURS:** Paid: Instructors and Business Counselors for The Edge Center, Inc. Entrepreneurial Training Pro-

grams. Entrepreneurial experience a plus. Teaching and/or Facilitator Experience required. Instructors will use a nationally recognized curriculum to present a multi-week training course to entrepreneurs, which will result in the completion of feasibility or growth plans for participants. Certification training provided. Curriculum review available upon appointment. Applications available upon request from The EDGE Center, Inc. located in the old Glades Central High School Library at 425 W. Canal Street N. Belle Glade. Application deadline August 8, 1997. Contact Carl Seibert - Executive Director at (561) 993-EDGE (3343). 8/7

**ATTENTION BELLE GLADE!** Postal positions: clerks and sorters. No experience required. Benefits. For exam, salary and testing information, call 1-800-547-4787, ext. 1337, 8am-8pm. 8/7

**TRACTOR DRIVER - Lykes Bros., Inc.** Southern Operating Division, has immediate opening for one tractor driver at our sugar cane farm. Must have at least one year prior experience driving tractors utilized in sugar cane farming and have a valid driver's license. Applications now being accepted at: Lykes Bros., Inc. Southern Operating Division, 106 SW CR721, Okeechobee, FL 34974. AA/EEO. M/F/D/V. A drug-free workplace. 8/14

**PART-TIME RECEPTIONIST** for busy physician's office. Two days a week, evenings. Bilingual helpful. Call 561-798-0682 or fax resume, 561-795-2896. 8/14

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM** IS SEEKING full-time, highly organized Crisis Intervention Specialist. Bachelor's degree and one year experience required. Must be flexible, speak Spanish and reside in the Belle Glade, Western community area. Fax resume to M.P. Cummings at 561-833-2340. 8/28

**SOUTH BAY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY SEEKING:** Physician. Must have a Florida certification. Excellent! Salary + Benefits. Fax resume (561) 992-9551. EOE M/F/H/V. 8/7

**CLIENT SERVICES AIDE Job Summary:** Responsible for assisting the Client Services Coordinator and case managers by performing routine duties and services for persons with HIV infection. Qualifications: High school graduate with Florida certification in homemaking or nursing assistant. Minimum sixteen hours of training in topics related to human development and interpersonal relationships, nutrition management, food-storage, use of equipment and supplies, planning and organization of household tasks, and principles of cleanliness and safety. Two years work experience in home care or a health care setting. Good verbal and written skills effective for documentation in client records as well as communication with staff, clients and others in the community. Reliable car and valid Florida driver's license. Ability to manage stress related to job requirements and characteristics. Good personal hygiene and be neat in appearance. Flexible, creative, articulate, self-directing, assertive and cooperative. 8/7

**ROOM VAC MECHANIC,** to operate roof vacuum equipment. 561-848-0333. 8/14

**STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS GLADES CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION Vocational Instructor II - F/C.** Position #01357. This position requires Carpentry. Pay range: \$782.44 to \$1251.58 bi-weekly. Vocational Instructor II - F/C. Position #090000. This position is an OPS position - Temporary with no benefits. This job is for an experienced Air Conditioning Duct Mechanic. Pay: \$18.00 per hour. State of Florida applications may be obtained at Glades Correctional Institution, 500 Orange Avenue Circle, Belle Glade, Florida 33430. Phone (561) 996-8241 or your nearest Job Service of Florida office. EEO/AA. 8/7

**The Sun Classifieds are continued on page 12**



# Classifieds

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**SPECIAL: Run your ad four consecutive weeks, and the last two weeks are half price! Call for info.**



## Employment

**DRIVERS-FLATED \$1,000 SIGN-ON BONUS** New pay package! Monthly Bonus Program! Meet CDL-A & 6 months OTR ECK. Miller 1-800-611-6636. Owner Operators also Welcome! FCAN

**DRIVER-HAUL** over 80% drop-in-hook freight in late-model equipment and get real respect! Competitive pay, plenty of home time. SCALES Transport, an Ameri-Truck Company. 1-800-320-0927. FCAN

**DRIVERS OTR** McLendon Trucking Now Hiring! Company Drivers earn up to \$3.74 With Fuel/Safety Bonus. Owner Operators earn \$2 employee/week. Call 1-

**GOVERNMENT JOBS HIRING NOW** 11-335 Per Hr. Paid Training Job Benefits 7 Days 1-800-439-7353 Ext. 3160. F. CAN

**GOVT POSTAL JOBS NOW HIRING.** Start \$13.74/hr. 818-506-5354 ext. 8310. FCAN

**GOVERNMENT JOBS.** Now hiring in your area. \$16,000-\$68,000. Call 1-800-883-0891 ext. J-400 for current Federal, County & State lists. FCAN

**DRIVERS. SWIFT TRANSPORTATION** Now Hiring Truck Drivers. Regional Runs Available. Training is Available/Excellent Pay & Benefits. Consistent Miles. Retention Incentive. Tuition Reimbursement. 1-

**ROOFERS/SHIELD METAL WORKERS** willing to learn a trade, we offer training programs and hourly wage. 561-848-0333. 8/14

**EARN MONEY READING BOOKS!** \$30,000/yr income potential. Details. 1-800-513-4343. ext. Y1616. FCAN

**FRIENDLY TOYS & GIFTS** has immediate openings in your area. Number One in Party plan: Toys, gifts, Christmas, Home decor. Free catalog and information. 1-800-488-4875. FCAN

**DRIVER NOT GETTING THE MILES or Pay you Want?** 1. Leader in Miles. 2. Average 1,850 Miles/Trip. 3. Top Line Equipment. Experienced Drivers/Owner Operators. Covenant Transport-1-800-441-4394. 1-888-MORE-PAY Graduates 1-800-338-6428. FCAN

**SUMMER IN THE ROCKIES & WEST.** RN's, LPN's, CNA's, travel, local, permanent placement, health insurance, cash bonus, great salary, no fee, travel pay, housing, PAM. 800-347-5317. FCAN

## Miscellaneous For Sale

**STAR TREK COLOR POSTCARDS.** 92 DIFFERENT ONES, ONLY \$100.00. Mar. Lynn Moore, 1953 calendar only \$25. Set of 3 postcards only \$20. All TOPICAL POST-CARDS SOLD-954-971-6692 OR 1-800-971-6692 ext. 18. FCAN

**CHANGING TABLE, \$40. WALKER.** 15's. Baby clothes 6-12 months. Call Anita, 933-0368. 8/7

**79 FORD LTD, \$500.** Has new transmission, battery and carburetor. Needs work on motor. 924-5316 after 5pm. 8/7

**FACTORY LEFTOVERS SAM'S CLUB** Aug. 7-10. Save Thousands. Bank Reps/Estate buyers RY's. Open to the public-Dealers Welcome. Sam's Club.

## HELP WANTED

• **Managers** (Resume Required)  
• **Line Level Positions**  
Cook, Salad Bar, Servers  
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Apply in Person.  
**SHONEY'S**  
1030 W. Sugarland Highway  
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and We Warranty  
Every Car Sold

1997 Ford Escort, 4 dr. Gold  
1996 Mitsubishi Mirage, 4 dr. Green  
1996 Chevrolet Cavalier, 4 dr. Green  
1996 Hyundai Accent, 4 dr. Silver  
1996 Chevrolet Beretta, 2 dr. White  
1996 Toyota Tacoma Pickup, White  
1997 Ford Exc 1700 4 dr. Pickup, Red/Blue  
1994 Mercury Sable, 4 dr. GS, Blue  
1994 Chevrolet Cavalier, 4 dr. Red  
1994 Jeep Wrangler 4x4, Red  
1994 Ford F-150 L Pickup Truck, Black  
1994 Plymouth Shadow, 3 dr. Green  
1994 Honda Accord EX, 2 dr. Green  
1994 Oldsmobile Delta Supreme, 4 dr. Blue  
1994 Chevrolet Cobalt, 4 dr. Blue  
1994 Ford Aspire, 2 dr. Red  
1993 Mazda 626, 4 dr. Burgundy  
1993 Toyota Camry LE, 4 dr. Green  
1993 Mitsubishi Eclipse, 2 dr. Red  
1993 Ford Escort, 4 dr. Blue  
1993 Dodge Dakota Pickup, Blue/White  
1994 Oldsmobile Delta Supreme, 4 dr. Blue  
1991 Ford F-150 Pickup, Red  
1991 Toyota Tercel 2 dr. White  
1991 Chevrolet Cobalt, 4 dr. Blue  
1990 Ford Aerostar Van, Burgundy  
1988 Ford Escort, 2 dr. Burgundy  
1989 Isuzu I-Mark, 4 dr. Blue  
1988 Plymouth Voyager LE Van, White/White  
1988 Ford Mustang, 2 dr. Blue  
1988 Plymouth Voyager Van, Silver  
1986 Ford Tempo, 4 dr. Beige  
1986 Chevrolet Cavalier, 4 dr. Blue  
1987 Chrysler 5th Ave, 4 dr. Silver/Black  
1986 Buick Skylark, 2 dr. white  
1983 Dodge Aries SE 4 dr. White  
1979 GMC Pickup Truck, Brown/White

Call 1-800-267-5715, ext. 50.

**IMMEDIATE OPENING**  
for a  
**Billing specialist** with excellent  
organizational skills and  
enthusiasm.  
Medical office experience helpful.  
Fax resume to  
**(941) 357-7449**

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If you have an event  
coming up that you would like us to put in  
*The Sun* newspaper, help us out by borrowing  
our camera to take your pictures. We will  
develop them and put them in *The Sun*  
with your story.  
For More Information call Brenda or Yvonne  
at 996-4404.

**COUNTRY CARS USA**  
700 E. Sugarland Hwy.  
(Across From Robbins Rest.)  
(Toll Free)  
888-252-0000 941-902-9585

1. 1997 Ford F150 161 42979  
2. 1985 VOLVO 740GDA 12871 82061  
3. 1984 FORD 1985 11821 1746 82061  
4. 1986 BUICK 1484859304 15072 82061  
5. 1996 RANGER 18270488 82014

All of the above vehicles are currently stored at the  
653 327 of South location in South Bay, Florida.  
Published: The Sun, August 7, 1997  
Legal No. 97-90

**10690 Beach Blvd, Jacksonville. FCAN**  
715-3297. FCAN

**NEW BREAKTHROUGH IN FUND RAISING!** Your group gets a big check every month, fast and easy. Call 24 hour recorded message for details. (904) 367-9597. FCAN

**STEEL BUILDING SALE.** "Final Clearance!" 32 x 40 WAS \$4766. Now \$4344.40 x 60 Was \$9988. Now \$8244. Others included. Pioneer 1-800-688-5422. FCAN

**MUST SELL!** 3 Underlived Arch Steel Buildings 20x24, 25x30, 30x58. Financing Available. Must Sell Immediately! Great for Backdrop Shops and Garages. Call Today 1-800-341-7007. FCAN

## Notices

**NEED CASH?** I buy old coins, guns, and pocket watches. Call 407-996-9400. th

**DO YOU HAVE DIABETES?** Receive your glucose monitor & supplies at no cost to you! Call Rainbow Foundation Toll-free 24 hours 1-800-226-5913 "People who Care". FCAN

**A BEAUTIFUL CANDLELIGHT OLD-FASHIONED WEDDING.** Smoky Mountains near Gatlinburg, overlooking river. HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE, Cabins, Jacuzzi, Ordained Ministers. No Test/Waiting. HEARTLAND 1-800-448-8697 (VOWS). FCAN

**COLLOIDAL MINERALS OF THE TYPE** described on "Dead Doctors Don't Lie" tape. Directly from the Clark Mine. No membership. \$11.95/quart, sent in gallons. 1-800-470-8638. FCAN

**GERMAN STUDENT** Scandinavian, European, South American, Asian, Russian Exchange students arriving August. Become a host family/AYSE. Call 1-800-SIBLING.WWW.SIBLING.ORG FCAN

**MAKE MONEY IN YOUR SLEEP ON THE INTERNET!** No computer needed! Go to [www.cyber-action.com/ed/sunmoney.html](http://www.cyber-action.com/ed/sunmoney.html) If not on internet call 1-800-

**\*\*POSTAL JOBS\*\***  
\$12.68/hr to start, plus benefits. Carriers, sorters, computer runners, maintenance. Call today for application and information 9 am to 9 pm 7 days 1-800-267-5715, ext. 50.

**PAHOKEE NOW RENTING 1 bedroom** \$230, 2 bedroom \$350, per month. Nice & clean apartment building at 314 Rardin Ave. Now accepting Section 8 rent subsidy. Call Parker Apartments at 924-5493 or 924-1959. th

**APARTMENTS For Rent**  
PAHOKEE NOW RENTING 1 bedroom \$230, 2 bedroom \$350, per month. Nice & clean apartment building at 314 Rardin Ave. Now accepting Section 8 rent subsidy. Call Parker Apartments at 924-5493 or 924-1959. th

**1BR APARTMENT & MONTHLY MOTEL** Rooms for rent. 9 NW Avenue D, Belle Glade. 996-2970. th

**WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAINS** Where there is Cool Mountain air, views & streams! For FREE brochure of Mountain Properties Call 1-800-642-5333 Realty of Murphy 517 Peachtree St., Murphy, NC 28906. FCAN

**LEGAL Services**  
DIVORCE \$125 Covers children, property division, name change, military, missing spouse, etc. One signature required. Excludes court fees, uncontested. Paperwork done for you. 1-800-547-9900. Budget Divorce. FCAN

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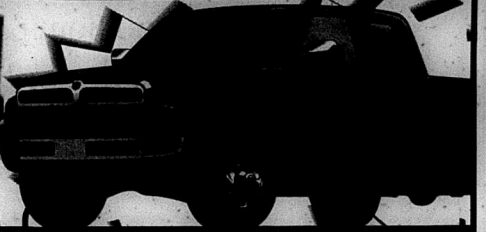
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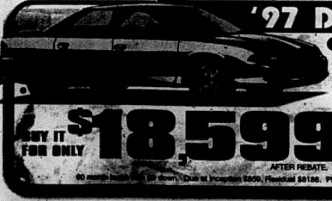


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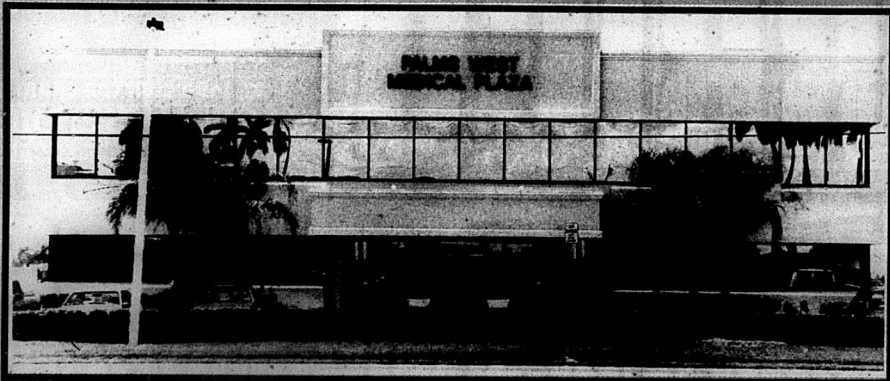
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Columbia Palms West Hospital has achieved accreditation with commendation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. This is the highest level of accreditation awarded by the Joint Commission, which is the nation's oldest and largest accrediting body.

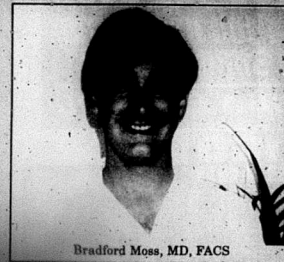
"Receiving Accreditation with Commendation is a significant achievement, one that recognizes exemplary performance by Columbia Palms West Hospital", says Dennis S. O'Leary, M.D., President, Joint Commission. "This organization should be commended for its commitment to providing quality care to the people in the community."

PEDIATRICS	
 <h3>The Pediatric Center</h3> <p>Shirley Marineau, M.D. Stacey Clark, M.D. Grisell Diaz de Villegas, M.D. Susan Shamaskin, DO Ali Khosravani, M.D.</p> <p><b>(561) 996-5252</b></p>	

ORTHOPEDIC/SPODIATRY
 <h3>ORTHOPEDIC CENTER OF PALM BEACH COUNTY</h3> <p>Jeffrey L. Kugler, M.D., Gen. Orthopedics/Sports Medicine John S. Levin, D.P.M., Podiatry/Foot &amp; Ankle Surgery Charles J. Matuszak, M.D., Gen. Orthopedics/Sports Medicine Theresa E. Rattey, M.D., Pediatric Orthopedics Alan J. Schefer, M.D., Hand Surgery Charles M. Sonu, M.D., Spine Surgery Edward W. Sandall, M.D. Michael S. Zeide, M.D. Marvin A. Kohn, M.D. Joseph B. Chahal, M.D. Emilio S. Musso, M.D. Louis F. Donaghue, M.D. Jeffrey A. Press, M.D. Charles W. Graubert, M.D. Jack B. Goldberg, D.O. James T. Clancy, D.P.M.</p> <p><b>(561) 967-6500</b> <b>1-800-633-5783</b></p>

UROLOGY	FAMILY PRACTICE	CARDIOLOGY	NEUROSURGERY
 <h3>Palm Beach Urology Associates</h3> <p>Edward R. Becker, M.D. Rafael R. Lopez, M.D. Bradford Moss, M.D.</p> <p><b>(561) 996-7016</b></p>	 <p>Martin Harland, D.O., P.A. Pedro Sanchez, D.O. Ernest Riggs, P.A.</p> <p><b>(561) 996-2024</b></p>	 <h3>CARDIOLOGY PARTNERS OF THE PALM BEACHES, P.A.</h3> <p>Chandra Venugopal, M.D., F.A.C.C., F.C.C.P. Jean Foucauld, M.D., F.A.C.C.</p> <p><b>(561) 996-8799</b></p>	<p>Charles Theofilos, M.D.</p> <p><b>(561) 992-8788</b></p> <div>  <h3>INTERNAL MEDICINE</h3> <p>Shekhar Sharma, M.D.</p> <p><b>(561) 996-7742</b></p> </div>

### PHYSICIAN SPOTLIGHT



Bradford Moss, MD, FACS

### Bradford Moss, M.D. Joins Palm Beach Urology

Edward Becker, MD and Rafael Lopez, MD, principals of Palm Beach Urology Associates, are pleased to announce that Bradford Moss, MD, FACS of Royal Palm Beach has joined their practice. Dr. Moss grew up in West Palm Beach, where he attended Forest Hill High School. He is a graduate of Tulane University and the University of Miami Medical School.

Following his internship at Akron General Medical Center, Dr. Moss completed a urology residency at Northeastern Ohio University College of Medicine and achieved board certification in adult and pediatric urology in

1991. He then spent several years as a partner in a successful South Carolina urology practice before returning to West Palm Beach. Most recently, Dr. Moss was affiliated with the West Palm Beach Veterans Administration Hospital as a full time urologist.

Dr. Moss is trained in adult and pediatric urology and treats a variety of conditions, including incontinence, impotence, urinary tract infections, prostrate disorders, prostrate cancer and kidney stones.

"I sincerely believe that successful communication between the physician and the patient is extremely important," says Dr.

Moss. "Patients need to feel comfortable with their doctors - and to know that the doctor is listening to what they say. By paying attention to what our patients tell us, we can do a better job of managing their healthcare."

Palm Beach Urology Associates has four locations serving Palm Beach and Hendry counties. Their offices are located in Wellington, Lake Worth, Belle Glade and Clewiston.

"We're pleased to welcome Dr. Moss," said Dr. Becker. "He is a respected professional who brings many years of experience and a reputation for providing compassionate patient care to our practice."

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1997 Revised

# Lake Okeechobee

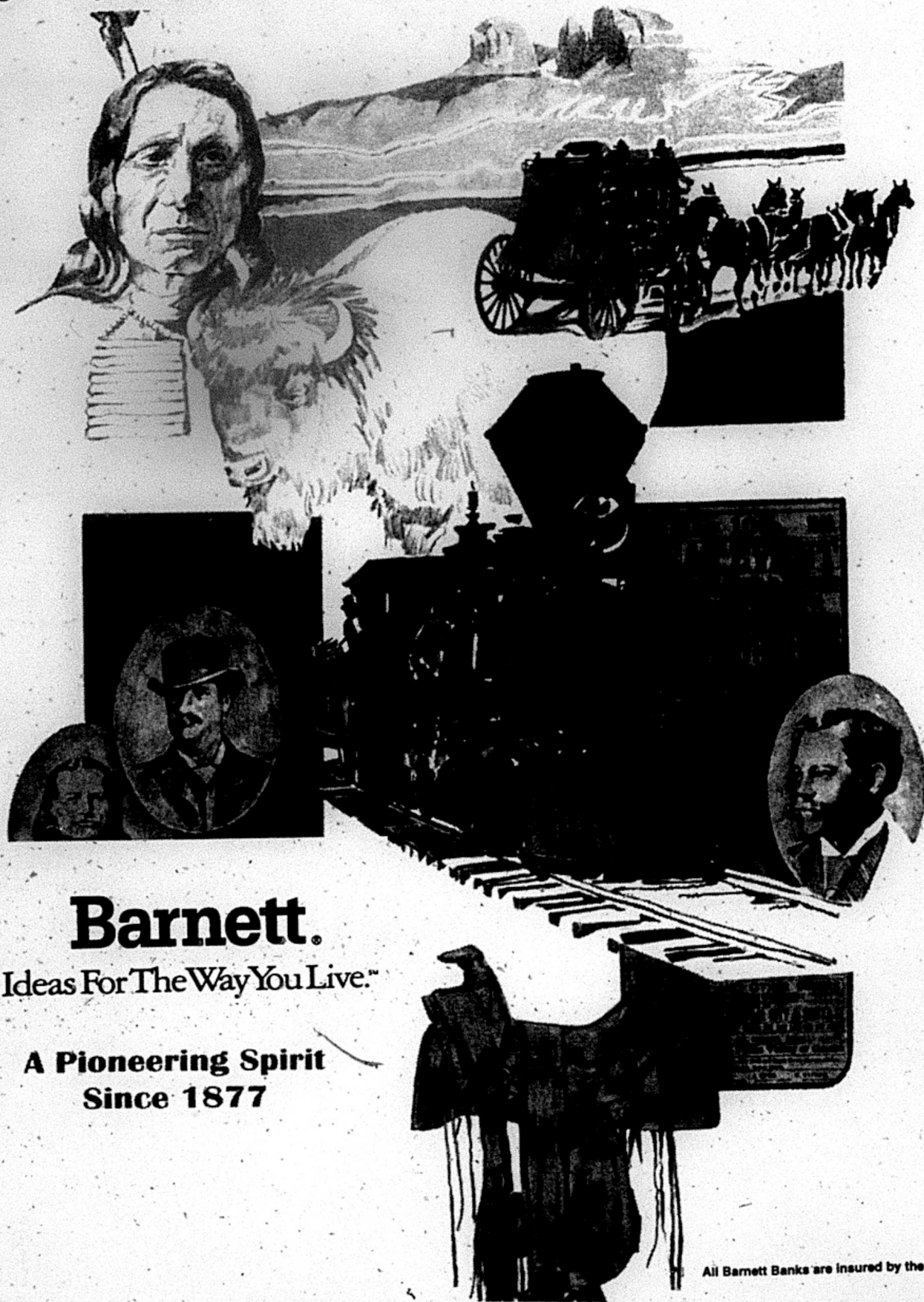
## 'Lady of Mystery'

Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow



August 1997

Supplement to Okeechobee News, Clewiston News,  
The Sun, Glades County Democrat & Caloosa Belle  
Written by Twila Valentine



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## Forward

We could never find a better neighbor than our grand old friend, Lake Okeechobee. Truly her blessings are bountiful. Yet, somehow we, who live on her shores, tend to lose sight of that.

We need to count those blessings. Not only do we enjoy her recreational values year round, but we reap a bonanza of business benefits from her, as well. It is no exaggeration to say that virtually all of our visitors, summer and winter, are here because of the lake, and who knows the number of permanent residents who are here for the same reason.

This economic diversity provides a great plus for us, a stabilizing addition to our tried and true standby — agriculture.

While it is true that no other community benefits so directly from the big lake as does Okeechobee, it is equally true that no other community would suffer more from any degradation of this marvelous treasure. Her vitality means vitality for us, if she hiccups, we get a headache. We must never forget that because it means that we, of all people, should be the most concerned that our generous friend is strong and healthy.

In this 1997 update of the life and times of Lake Okeechobee, you are going to find a listing of the profusion of benefits and values so many enjoy from the lake. She is the habitat for an inestimable wildlife and plant population, so rich and diverse that people worldwide come to see, to fish and to hunt. She is truly the "liquid heart," the supplier and natural buffer of water needs for much of South Florida— urban, environmen-

tal and agricultural alike. And, she is a repository of a rich history and culture which is so refreshing in a state which is too often thought of as just Mickey Mouse and beaches. One wonders, can she always be so much to so many people?

As you read, you will see that the lake is hurting. Unknowingly, we have lived too hard on the land upstream, sending more nutrients into her heart in a few years, than went there in decades before. Though it is doubtful that the lake is on the verge of dying — she remains productive and beautiful — still signs of continuing harm remain. We are rushing to correct this and much progress has been made. Yet, the data shows that we have not reached the goal.

With this unfinished work, the future of the lake — and for us — is unclear. Since our outlook hinges so much on the lake, we have a crucial test to pass: Can we protect the lake, removing any chance of our human footprints smudging this national treasure, and assure that she will always be healthy and strong? We simply cannot fail. Our test papers are still being graded on this critical issue.

If we pass this test and our big lake's future is secure, then we can expect Okeechobee to have an increasingly prominent place in Florida's economy. Look at the changes that are upon us. Florida is now over 14 million people and headed for 20 million.

The Lake Okeechobee area will be an important destination for those crowded urban dwellers — there are

8 million of them nearby now — who will want more and more to get out of the rat race and revisit their rural roots. Remember, they are now four or five generations from the farm, and our area, with its diverse environmental values and its modern agriculture, can provide an ideal retreat for them.

Both ecotourism and agritourism will be important parts of our economy. To the extent that we preserve our priceless "country village" atmosphere, we will see our town and its way of life revered by those who live on the asphalt coasts. We already know this place is special. Brace yourself for what will happen when our urban cousins find out that there is a better life, closer to the land, and the new computer age makes their living away from the crowded coast more and more feasible.

Remember, this optimistic view of our future is conditioned on that critical assumption — that we make sure our grand old friend, Lake Okeechobee, is strong and happy. How we face this challenge is truly a test for us. Will we resolve to leave this place better than we found it? Read on. Study to pass the test. Our children for generations to come are watching.

**Frank W. (Sonny) Williamson**  
Chairman, Governing Board  
South Florida Water  
Management District  
and  
Okeechobee County  
Agribusinessman

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GARY ABEL, GENERAL MANAGER



## Introduction

Water is the most important resource needed by man to sustain life. Floridians, up to now, have been fortunate to have had a plentiful supply of cheap, fresh water. Those days may be coming to an end.

The mysterious lady with the shimmering skirts known as Lake Okeechobee is not an entity that exists by herself. The 730-square mile freshwater lake is considered the middle link in a three-part complex system. The huge Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades ecosystem covers more than 15,000 square miles of central and south Florida and is considered by scientists worldwide to be unlike any other ecosystem in the world. The system encompasses a diverse variety of soils, animal and plant life, and weather conditions. Over the years, the entire ecosystem has become heavily agricultural in nature.

As the population in the coastal areas has exploded, 90 percent of the state's residents live within 10 miles of the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico, the demands for flood control have increased. The demands for the agricultural products produced in the area have increased, as have the demands for fresh water, and the demands to preserve the fish and wildlife habitats.

Efforts to preserve and restore the delicate balance of this unique ecosystem have brought confrontations between those who depend on the area for a livelihood and those who are determined to restore the system as near as possible to its original natural state.

Federal, state and local governmental agencies, dairymen, cattle ranchers, sugar cane growers, vegetable farmers, environmentalists, commercial and recreational fishermen, have all spoken out

with their own self-interests foremost in their minds. Even the scientific community disagrees with exactly what should be done to maintain the sensitive ecosystem and the animal and human inhabitants within it.

Millions of dollars have already been spent, and millions more are proposed for solutions which may—or may not—work.

The five counties which surround the lake, Glades, Hendry, Martin, Okeechobee, and Palm Beach, have relied heavily on their agricultural base for the past eight decades. Martin and Palm Beach counties, which also border the coast, count tourism and industry as economic factors in the eastern portions of their counties, but the western parts are still predominantly agricultural. Glades, Hendry and Okeechobee counties rely almost totally on their agricultural base for economic stability.

The five-county area in 1996 (the latest statistics available from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services) produced revenues of \$1.389 billion in vegetables, sod and sugar cane. However, that is a drop from the \$2.5 billion produced in 1987.

The same counties derived more than \$213.3 million from the beef and dairy industry, and an estimated \$3.8 million from the commercial and recreational fishing industry.

Other counties which comprise the Kissimmee River Valley, such as Highlands, Polk and Osceola, are also heavily agricultural in both beef cattle and citrus. These three counties derive millions annually from the agricultural practices in the Valley.

Many of the ranches, farms and dairies in all five of these lake counties are family-owned businesses tracing their histo-

ries back several generations. This fact makes their efforts quite strong in attempting to stop any legislation from putting them out of business. For this group of people, it is a very personal and emotional issue. They feel they are not only fighting to maintain a livelihood, but for their family history and honor, as well.

At the south end of the lake, the 700,000-acre Everglades Agriculture Area produces large amounts of winter vegetables and 26 percent of the sugar in the United States annually. In the 1995 season, 417,000 acres in Glades, Hendry, Martin and Palm Beach counties were planted in sugar cane. Seven mills in Hendry and Palm Beach counties processed the 15.8 million tons of cane.

According to studies by the University of Florida, the Florida sugar industry is a major component of Florida agriculture and generates, on an annual basis, over \$1.5 billion dollars of economic activity and over 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

Concern with the loss of the ecological factors began to be heard in 1971 when the channelization of the Kissimmee River was completed. Farmers and ranchers in the Kissimmee River Valley had fought against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project which turned a 100-mile long meandering river into a 58-mile canal.

Caught in the middle of most of the controversy about water in Lake Okeechobee and its tributaries is the South Florida Water Management District.

Originally created as the Central and South Florida Flood Control District, the agency whose initial charge was to keep people's feet dry in wet years and water flowing during drought years, found that with a name change the Florida Legislature continued, year after year, to impose new responsibilities on the agency, turn-

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## Lady of Mystery - Page 5

ing it into the environmental watchdog for the 16 county area which extends from Orlando south to the tip of the state.

In addition to controlling flood waters, the agency was suddenly in charge of water quality as well as quantity, policing the users and what they were or were not discharging into the district's waters, and implementing programs and studies on ecosystem restoration all of which was new territory for the agency.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, based on mandates from the Florida Legislature, the district has produced the Kissimmee River Restoration Plan, the Lake Okeechobee Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan (SWIM) and the Everglades Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan. All of these multi-million dollar plans profess to offer solutions to the improvement of the water quality,

improvement of wildlife habitat and preservation and restoration of a very complex ecosystem in the 16 counties from the town of Kissimmee south to the tip of the state. The largest percentage of the proposals are untried and no one really knows if they will produce the results mandated by the Florida lawmakers, who are driven by a powerful coalition of environmental groups.

In addition, in 1994 the Legislature adopted the Everglades Forever Act, which sets the goals for the cleanup of the entire area from the south shore of Lake Okeechobee to the tip of the state.

This 1997 update of Lake Okeechobee: Lady of Mystery contains all the historical information which the original publication contained five years ago. New information, detailing the myriad of things which have occurred in the past five years are detailed. We hope this

book gives you a better insight into the Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow of the gracious lady with the shimmering skirts.

Will our children and grandchildren still enjoy the benefits our generation and preceding generations have enjoyed?

Will this unique ecosystem encompassing 16 of the state's 67 counties survive use and misuse into the next century?

A cross section of governmental regulatory agencies, scientists from universities across the country, environmental groups, agribusiness, visitors, are all joining together to turn the tide of past errors. The future depends on what we do today. You and I are just as responsible as all the officially named governmental, civic and environmental groups to preserve this unique "liquid heart of Florida."



Lake Okeechobee, the Lady of Mystery with the shimmering skirts, still has the ability to evoke a myriad of emotions. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District.)



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## Chapter 1

Like all memorable heroines in the great romance novels, she has been described by many adjectives throughout the centuries. Her past is shrouded in myth and legend and has been for centuries. Men today are still attempting to uncover all her secrets. Early adventurers and explorers gave her many names, none of which really described the lady and all her attributes.

Lake Okeechobee has often been described as beautiful, lonely, silent, mysterious, inspiring, exotic, treacherous and even, as she has exhibited in the past, deadly. To different people, and at different times in history,

she has certainly been all of those things.

Today, as we near the beginning of a new century, this memorable lady has become somewhat aged, beset with ills resulting from years of high living, and while still proud, just a little battered, scarred and worn from illness and ill use.

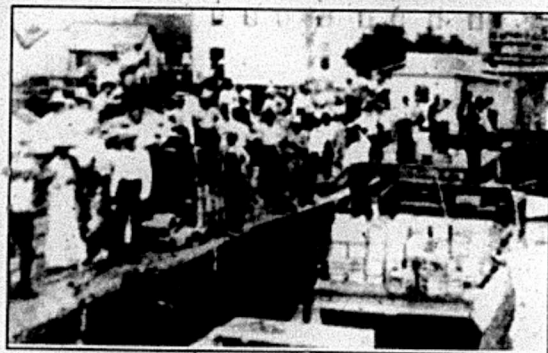
Laguna del Espiritu Santo (Lagoon of the Holy Spirit) was first mentioned in the annals of history in a story related during the early sixteenth century by Escalante de Fontaneda. The Spaniard was captured by the Caloosa Indians and held as a slave. He escaped after 17



Shortly after the turn of the century, land seekers literally arrived by the boatload to buy the farms covered by the rich black muck along the south rim of Lake Okeechobee.



The first road between South Bay and Belle Glade



There were no roads to speak of to reach the interior of central and south Florida, so the waterways provided transportation, mail service, and even this market place, where boats brought in the goods which were bought, sold and traded with the early settlers in the big lake area.



In the heyday of the commercial fishing industry, shortly after the turn of the century, the city of Okeechobee along Taylor Creek, was lined with fish houses, ice houses, and docks for the fishing boats coming off Lake Okeechobee. (Photo courtesy Judge William Hendry)

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years and claimed the natives had told him of a great lake on whose shores were many towns containing 30 to 40 people.

In 1564, two Spaniards shipwrecked on the Gulf Coast of Florida were struggling through the uncharted wilderness of Florida's interior trying to make their way to St. Augustine. In their travels, they reported the sighting of a great lake of freshwater.

Lake Mayacco and Lake Macoco were other names applied over the years to the second largest freshwater lake in the United States, the "Big Water," which is the translation of the Indian word, Okeechobee, remained as her final name.

The lake's existence remained shrouded in mystery until the mid-1830's when the U.S. Army pursued Indians to its shores during the Seminole Wars.

It is somewhat difficult today to visualize how the lake appeared over 150 years ago when the white man first discovered it.

Mother Nature gifted this beautiful lady with an array of accessories to accentuate her exotic beauty. To summarize both historical and fictional accounts, let's try to imagine how she looked in all her natural splendor. The lake stretched some 32 miles from east to west and about 37 miles north to south, and encompassed some 730 square miles and a half-million acres. There was quite a divergence of plant life, and an indivisible dividing line marked the differences in growth on the shores around the lake.

The northern shoreline was ringed with dense stands of water oak, maple, cypress, popash, rubber and palmetto trees, and provided a lush green headpiece for our lady. For about 30 miles north of the shoreline, there were prairie lands and pine forests. The prairies contained wire grass, and sedge, which became excellent grazing grounds for the hundreds of wild cattle which roamed the lands. The prairies were unbroken except

for patches of the pines in flat woods, most of which were pitchy pines, some extending their branches skyward to a height of 75 to 100 feet.

On the northwestern shore, Fisheating Creek, with its many marshes, drained into the lake.

On the south side of the lake, and stretching almost half-way up the east side of the lake, sawgrass in water reached in an unbroken sea almost to the tip of the state. This was called, and still is, the Everglades.

On the southwestern shore, trees became more sparse, and there were great stretches of willows and elder bushes. The lake bottom along this section of shoreline was so overgrown with flags, bonnets and high grass, that when the lake rose in the summer rains, our lady would spread her shimmering skirts as far back as six miles.

Her skirts in this area were dotted with blue blooming pickerel weed which blended with the creamy white blossoms of the bottlebrush clumps.

On the south shore and half-way up the eastern shoreline, a solid belt of what was then known as custard apple trees decorated the eastern side of our lady's skirt. The strange looking trees, completely blanketed with a moonvine cover, extended more than two miles in width at some locations. Beginning close to Clewiston, the forest extended all the way to Port Mayaca, about 32,000 acres of woods.

This now nearly extinct tree is a member of the pawpaw family. While the common name is Custard Apple, it is also called the Pond Apple and the Alligator Apple. The branches were covered with bright, glossy green leaves, and the flower was creamily white, with a crimson center. Many feel it was a totally useless bit of vegetation, since its fruit, a pear-shaped yellow fruit with brown patches, was inedible

and its wood would hardly burn, but Mother Nature provided thousands of them to decorate the edges of our lady's skirts.

Beneath its gnarled, tangled branches and twisted trunks, in a dark, shadowy domain, thanks to the moonvine cover, the ground was bare from lack of sunlight, but lacy ferns found a home among the tangle of the root system. Once in a while, a giant fern would unroll its brown-backed leaves.

Gourd vines, commonly called the Okeechobee gourd, with their green pendant fruit, added another accessory to our lady's wardrobe. A member of the pumpkin and squash family, the annual vine produces both yellow male and female flowers. The fruit is fleshy with a tough rind. It was also called Indian pumpkin. Long thought to be extinct, along with the custard apple, the Okeechobee gourd rose like a phoenix in a few areas on the south side of Lake Okeechobee during the summer of 1997. What was even more unique, in each of the half dozen locations where the gourd is struggling to reestablish itself, the moonvine was also regenerating itself in the age-old relationship.

High in the tree branches, pineapple-like air plants perched like jewels strewn carelessly about the woods.

The bottom of the lake itself was very shallow, and was composed of hard muck, sand and shell. She was never the lady of clear pristine waters like the glacial lakes of the north. The almost constant winds kept her bottom sediments stirred, giving her waters a murky appearance. Scientists now agree that the lake has been eutrophic (productive) for more than 4000 years. The shoreline, for the most part, was black muck, with patches of sandy beaches scattered here and there along the wide expanse of shoreline.

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## Chapter Two

Dr. Angelo Heilprin was a scientist from the Wagner Free Institute of Science in Philadelphia, and in an extensive report published in 1887, he described what his expedition observed when they visited the lake in 1886. The expedition moved from the west coast of Florida up through the Caloosahatchee River and they arrived on the shores of Lake Okeechobee near present-day Moore Haven. Their first docking came at Observation Island, which he noted that up to then was not shown accurately in the maps of the day. One of his first notes was concerning the waters in the lake:

"The water itself, when not disturbed, is fairly clear, and practically agreeable. By the greater number of our party, it was used in preference to the barrel-water with which the schooner was provided. More generally, it (the waters) is tossed into majestic billows, which rake up the bottom, and bring to the surface a considerable infusion of sand, rendering the surface murky. Steadily blowing winds are frequent, presaging heavy swells.

"The border line of the lake is in most places not absolutely defined, owing to a continuous passage of the open waters into those of the Everglades; on the whole, however, the delimitation of the latter region is fairly well marked, the growth of saw-grass or flag terminating rather abruptly."

And commenting on the vegetation, Dr. Heilprin wrote in his 1887 report:

"We secured a landing opposite Observation Island at a spot where the vegetable accumulation, living and dead, of flag, lily, and grass was so dense as to permit of a safe footing, although numerous holes and pit-falls

everywhere revealed the unstable character of the fundement. A pole could readily be thrust into this vegetable bottom to a depth of four or five feet, or even more."

And, on exploring Taylor Creek at the north of the lake, he wrote:

"We spent somewhat more than two days in the exploration of this stream. In how much this 'creek' is a true creek in the ordinary acceptation of the word, or simple bayou opening out from the lake, we were unable to determine, owing to the vast masses of floating vegetation, water-lettuce, principally, which choke the different channels in their upper courses, and permitted a furthest penetration of our skiffs of probably no more than two or two and a half miles."

Wildlife abounded in the areas all around the perimeter of the lake, adding further bright accessories to the lake's appearance. A wide array of birds and waterfowl dotted the landscape which included: roseate spoonbills, anhingas, whooping cranes, wood ibises, a large variety of ducks, water turkeys, finches, the Carolina parakeet, bald eagles and storks. Today, many of these birds have become endangered or extinct. Thousands of the brightly colored parakeets perished in the freeze of 1895, although some stories of old-time residents of Okeechobee County claim to have seen some of them near the shoreline of the lake after the turn of the century.

The woods and waterways overflowed with otters, raccoons, opossums, squirrels, rabbits, turtles that literally paved the ground, deer, bear, panther, alligators, snakes of nearly every species, and insects which could be counted in the millions.

Dr. Heilprin again describes what it was like camping in what he called "the Okeechobee Wilderness."

"Animal life is very prolific in these wilds," he wrote, "and at almost all times the forest resounds with the echoes of some of its more musical denizens—the shrill cry of the limpkin or screamer, the hoarse croak of the great blue heron, or the castanet rattle of the amphibious multitude, the frogs, whose orchestration appears never to be final. Towards eventide, when the hooting of the great owl bids the sun to hie, and calls forth the slumbering voices of the night, the dryadic music attains its highest pitch; once more the castanet rattle, and finally all is quiet, save the hoarse bellowing of the alligator, which breaks from far and near upon the stillness of the midnight air."

Fish of many species had heavy populations beneath the surface of the lake. Even today, Lake Okeechobee has the reputation of being an excellent fishing lake, and travelers come from all over the world to test their lines in her waters. Large-mouth bass, several species of catfish, black crappie (speckled perch), bluegills and redear perch continue to lure anglers to her shores.



The first store at Rabbit Island was accessible to shoppers only by water craft.

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## Chapter Three

The first change in the countenance of the lake came in the late 1800's when Hamilton Disston dredged a navigable waterway from the town of Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee through the meandering Kissimmee River. Shortly after he signed a contract with the state of Florida to purchase four million acres of central and south Florida, he began his dredging and draining operation. In the process, he also cut canals between the many lakes in central Florida, lowering their levels by as much as nine to eleven feet. The water flowed southward through the twisting Kissimmee River into Lake Okeechobee. Disston's goal was to have a navigable waterway from Jacksonville to the Gulf of Mexico.

Disston's company also began cutting a channel from the Caloosahatchee River to the western shore of the lake, creating an outlet to the Gulf of Mexico. In this process, he connected Lake Flirt, Lettuce Lake, Bonnet Lake and Hicpochee Lake and they became a part of the river. It was through this newly-opened waterway that Dr. Heilprin's expedition traveled in 1886. With this outlet, came the birth of commercial shipping.

The Disston Land Company also began to cut canals southward from the southern tip of the lake, and they completed the first eight miles of the Miami Canal. Later, after the turn of the century, the Palm Beach Canal and the St. Lucie Canal were dug along the east side of the lake, forever scarring the countenance of the lake.

Disston's financial collapse in 1896 brought an end to his cosmetic changes to the face of the lake.

As man flocked to the shores of Lake Okeechobee to hunt, to fish, to farm and to live, the lake did not always turn her best face toward civilization as it began to encroach on her natural beauty.

Small towns began to spring up along her shores after the turn of the century. Prior to that, fishermen had discovered the treasure in her bountiful waters during the 1890's and many areas of the shoreline became dotted with commercial fishing camps during the last decade of the 19th century.

The first of these camps were established at the mouth of the Kissimmee River at the northern tip of the lake and to the west of the river at Buckhead Ridge.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Mother Nature used many of the elements to discourage those trying to earn a living along the lake's shores. Moore Haven in its earliest days around 1914 and 1915, found that its farming crops were subjected each winter to half a dozen freezes. Some began to speculate if this wasn't the



Upthegrove Beach in the 1920s was little more than sand paths used for a roadway. Note the two men sitting on each side of the roadway. The land along the northeast, northern, and northwest shoreline of Lake Okeechobee is sand consistency and not the black muck that is found around the south rim of the lake.



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## Page 10 - Lady of Mystery

coldest spot south of the Georgia line, said Lawrence Will, in his Cracker History of Okeechobee.

Muck fires also wreaked havoc on the farmers in those early days.

By 1922, water was the nemesis that plagued Moore Haven, Clewiston and other small communities on the western and southern shores of the lake. For the previous ten years or so, the lake's water level had been quite low. But, in 1922 the whole country was covered by a flood. Water covered everything and the following winter of 1922-23 was exceptionally wet, as well.

Crops rotted in the fields. Those which had ripened before the flood, could not be harvested as there was no way to get machinery or workers into the flooded fields. The newly constructed railroad spur between Moore Haven and Clewiston had its bed of sand and muck so thoroughly soaked that trains running over the line, wobbled and swayed on the unsteady rails and threatened to topple from the tracks.

When drainage began in the late 19th and early 20th Century, the rich black muck revealed around the southeastern, southern, and southwestern shoreline of Lake Okeechobee drew farming interests like a magnet to the area. During the decade of the 1920s, flooding and hurricanes destroyed much of the land and many of the farmers became discouraged and left. With the completion of the southern end of the Herbert Hoover Dike, interest in establishing farming along the south shoreline of the lake returned.

While some of the vegetable farmers have grown into large corporations like A. Duda and Sons, many of the farming operations are family-owned,

some in the third and fourth generations.

Today, the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) lies mainly in Martin, Palm Beach, Hendry and Glades counties and covers nearly 700,000 acres of land, over 500,000 acres of which lies in Palm Beach County. About 61 percent of the agricultural area, 420,000 acres, is planted in the production of sugar cane.

With a rollover factor of 2.5, the area produces \$2.5 billion annually in vegetables and sugar cane.

While there is evidence that sugar cane was grown in Florida as early as the 1500's, and attempts were made to establish a sugarcane industry in the 1880's and again in the 1920's, the industry did not gain a good foothold until just 30 years ago.

The Spanish grew sugar cane in Flagler County nearly 500 years ago, but the plantation was wiped out in an Indian raid.

Hamilton Disston attempted to establish sugar cane as a crop near Kissimmee following his purchase of 4,000,000 acres of Florida in 1881. He formed the St. Cloud Sugar Plantation on drained sawgrass muck. At one point, it produced as much as 60 tons of cane which yielded 5,000 pounds per acre, the most ever produced in America at that time.

With the collapse of the Disston empire in 1896, the sugar industry in Florida collapsed as well.

In 1920, the U.S. Department of Agriculture started a Cane Field Station at Canal Point. The experimental station was started to produce strains of cane which would be disease resistant, and was intended for cane production mainly in the state of Louisiana.

In 1923, the Florida Sugar and Food Products Company installed a 400 ton mill at Canal Point and produced their first sugar. According to Lawrence E. Will in his book, "Cracker History of Okeechobee," there were only 900 acres of sugar cane, and 800 of them were at Canal Point. The floods of 1922 and 1924 were devastating to the fledgling company, and a few years later, the Canal Point mill closed down.

In 1925, Bror Dahlberg, along with a small group of men, started the Southern Sugar Company at Clewiston and purchased 2800 acres which they planted in cane. The company went into receivership during the stock market crash in 1929.

In 1931, Charles Stewart Mott, a vice-president of General Motors, and Clarence R. Bitting, a financing and management specialist, organized the U.S. Sugar Corporation.

For years, sugar growers were permitted to produce only a small portion of the nation's total sugar, with the bulk of the supply coming from Cuba.

The takeover of Cuba by Fidel Castro removed all quotas from American growers, and in (1987-88), sugar growers in the EAA harvested 404.1 thousands of acres of sugar cane, and produced 1,566,000 short tons of raw sugar and 91.7 million gallons of blackstrap molasses, a by-product of sugar cane milling. The Florida sugar industry now produces about 21 percent of the sugar in the United States.

Irrigation waters were once back-pumped from agricultural fields, sugar cane and vegetable farms, into Lake Okeechobee. But, the protest over the excess nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) flowing into the lake, halted that practice several years ago.

Current drought conditions which

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are producing record low levels of water in the lake, have made SFWMD officials take a second look at re-instating the backpumping operation on a short-term basis during the drought.

Runoff from the agricultural area now flows southward through the Water Conservation Areas in western Palm Beach and Broward counties, and then into Everglades National Park at the southern tip of the state. Environmentalists and some scientists claim these waters are so nutrient-enriched they (contaminated surface waters) "...cause vegetation shifts and habitat changes that may cause nuisance species to out compete or eliminate native flora and fauna."

Rainfall in the EAA has left that particular area currently with an excess of standing water on those lands. Normally, those waters would be released into the Water Conservation Areas to the south, but with critical low water levels in existence at a time of the year when the rainy season is drawing to a close, has made officials think about backpumping the EAA runoff back into the lake in order to help raise the level of the lake.

The Florida Legislature adopted the Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan (SWIM) which orders the state's five water management districts to get the average loading of phosphorus reduced. For Lake Okeechobee, this means a reduction from 600 to 397 tons annually. The district's plan for Lake Okeechobee would set limits of .18 parts per million of water entering all points around the lake and 1.2 ppm in water flowing off individual land holdings north of the lake.

"The Everglades is an oligotrophic, or nutrient-limited system, which means that even relatively low concentrations of nutrients may have significant impacts on the Everglades ecology," is stated in a draft of the Everglades Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan (SWIM).

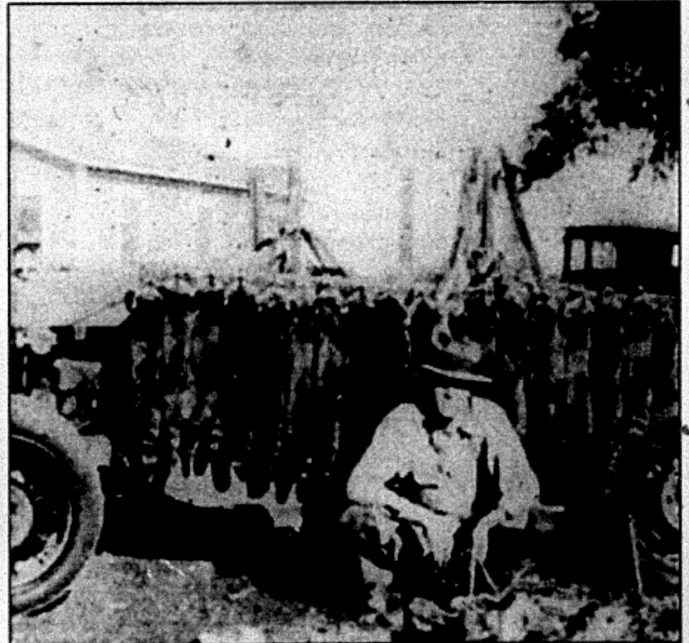
Examples cited most frequently is the explosion of the cattail population in the Water Conservation Areas #1 and #2. According to SFWMD studies, nearly 6,000 acres of diverse Everglades habitat has been replaced with cattails in WCA-1. According to WMD reports, nutrient loadings across the northern portion of WCA-2 have impacted an area of nearly 20,000 acres. The district reports claim that the cattails have caused a loss of native Everglades sawgrass communities, changes in periphyton communities, and degraded water quality.

The reports further claim that changes in the water quality have the potential to affect the quality of water being delivered to the Everglades National Park. The National Park Service has often expressed concern that the water quality is impacting the park resulting in vegetation changes and other adverse effects on wetland ecosystems.

While some standards for water quality were established some five years ago, the district now feels that more stringent water quality standards may need to be considered for water entering Everglades National Park.

Under the EAA SWIM plan, approximately 40,000 acres of lands in the EAA would be used as water management areas, and includes lands now planted in sod and sugar cane production. Waters would flow into these areas for retention and treatment to remove nutrients before it is released into the water conservation areas.

Opponents of the plan feel the solution is not the best one to resolve the problem.



Coon skins were a big money maker back in the late 1920s in the Glades. This is a photo of the late Willie Moss, a former long time resident of the Glades. The photo was loaned to the Belle Glade Sun by Myrtice Gilman, a resident of the Glades since 1927.

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## Chapter Four

A series of storms over the lake earned the large body of water the reputation of being a killer. Her shallowness belies the danger she presents during sudden squalls and storms. Even today, the lake's waters claim three or four lives in an average year.

The first true killer hurricane roared into Miami on Sept. 18, 1926 and literally devastated that city. The storm then streaked unimpeded across the empty Everglades, skirting the southwestern and western shoreline of our lady.

The storm did considerable damage in Clewiston, devastated the town of Moore Haven, and did considerable damage to Lakeport.

Following the floods in 1922-23, a muck and sand dike had been erected to protect farm fields from high-rising lake waters. When the hurricane hit in force, a surge in the storm waters collapsed the earthen dike and washed away houses, vehicles and people. It has been estimated that 150 people lost their lives in and around Moore Haven during this storm.

The hurricane on Sept. 16, 1928 was even more devastating to residents living along the shores of our lady's deceptive shimmering skirts.

Prior to this storm, it had rained almost continually during the month of August and into September. Between Aug. 8 and 13, nearly 14 inches of rain had fallen. It rained every day during the first 15 days of September. Rain gauges on the lake measured 21.5 inches for the month of September. Nine or more of those inches fell during the storm.

The elevation of the lake was over 16 feet and the Kissimmee River had risen from 17.8 in June to over 30 feet in August.

On the southern and southeastern shorelines of the lake, a levee had been constructed between 1923 and 1925. It had been built to prevent farm lands from being flooded by high lake levels. In the Lawrence Will book, Okeechobee Hurricane, Will stated, "Had there been no levee to pile up the water, there would have been no loss of life in either the hurricane of 1926 or 1928."

The levee extended from Pahokee past South Bay to Clewiston and for three miles beyond Moore Haven. The total length of the levee was approximately 47 miles.

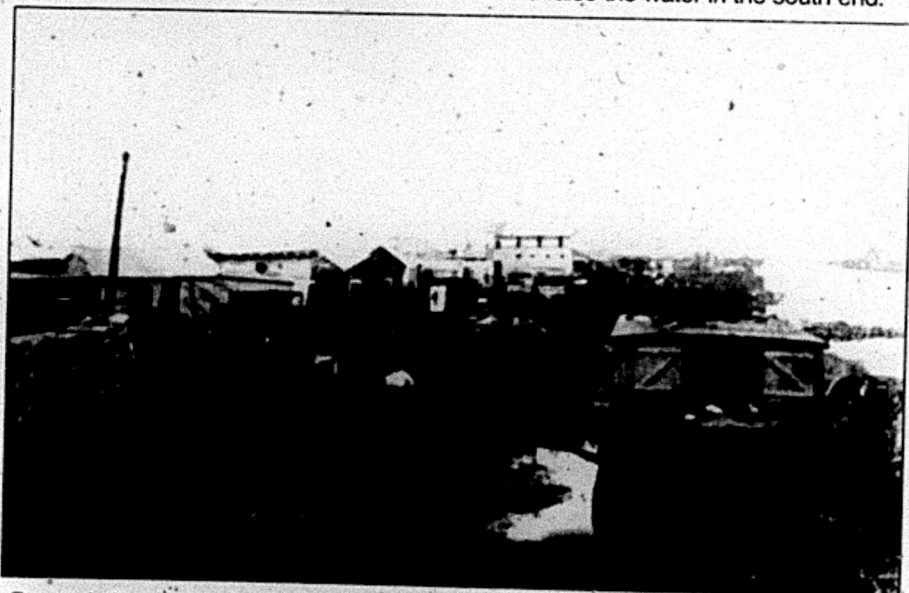
The hurricane, with extremely high winds, deluged the area with tons of rain, as well. The lake and Belle Glade first received the wind from the north and then

from the northwest. As the center passed, the wind returned from the south and southwest.

The waters piled up at one end of the lake by the velocity of the wind, then reversed themselves and slammed unchecked into the lake's northern end.

Will described what happened with the wind driven waters:

"In order to understand why the lake's waters, even though propelled by such incredible winds, could have surged over, tidal wave fashion, and inundated the land to a depth greater than the height of the levee, let us imagine Lake Okeechobee to be a large, shallow pan partly filled with water. The prolonged north wind would have the effect of tipping this pan, which would raise the water in the south end.



Devastation following the hurricane that hit the Lake Okeechobee area on Sept. 16, 1928 was total. Described as the fifth largest storm in history, more than 2,000 deaths resulted from it. This photo was from one of the areas along the south edge of the lake near Belle Glade. (Photo courtesy of Belle Glade Sun.)

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"The onslaught of the hurricane would tip the pan still further until the water reached the rim, or levee. Subsequent tipping, then, would precipitate a surge of water considerably higher than the top of the rim. Now, when the center of the storm had passed, the hurricane winds suddenly shifted from a northerly to a southerly direction. The imaginary pan was tilted in the opposite direction and the lake bottom here, which previously had been nearly dry for miles, was quickly inundated. The water, by the engineer's measurements, reached the same heights here it had previously been in South Bay. Due, however, to the configuration of the eastern shore between Bacom's Point and Chancey Bay, which was parallel to the direction of the flow, fairly straight and with a steeper slope, the water along this stretch did not reach excessive heights.

"Whole sections of the levee were completely breached, and whole sections of it down to solid ground were entirely carried away."

Canal Point, Pahokee, Belle Glade, Chosen, South Bay, and the islands in the south end of the lake, Kreamer, Torry and Ritta, were literally demolished when this storm washed over these communities.

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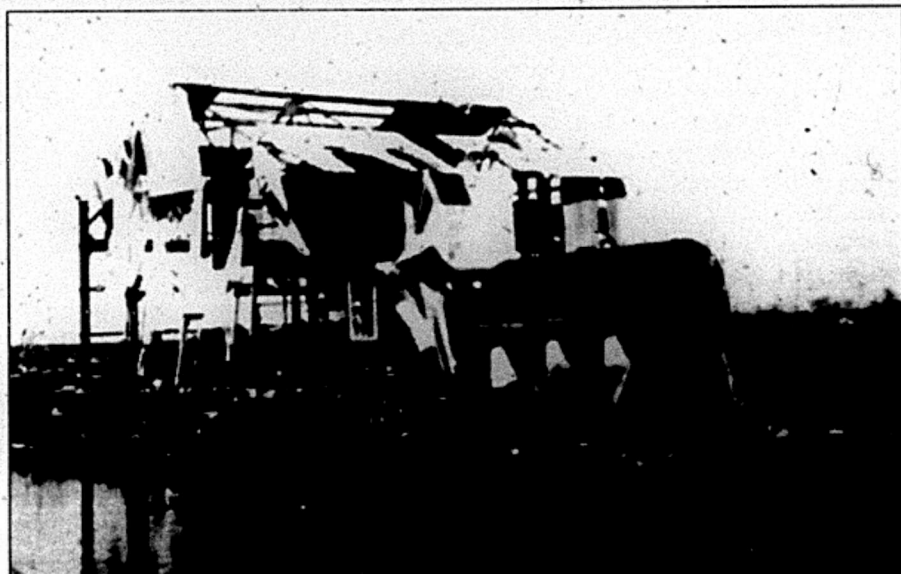
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## Chapter Four

A series of storms over the lake earned the large body of water the reputation of being a killer. Her shallowness belies the danger she presents during sudden squalls and storms. Even today, the lake's waters claim three or four lives in an average year.

The first true killer hurricane roared into Miami on Sept. 18, 1926 and literally devastated that city. The storm then streaked unimpeded across the empty Everglades, skirting the southwestern and western shoreline of our lady.

The storm did considerable damage in Clewiston, devastated the town of Moore Haven, and did considerable damage to Lakeport.

Following the floods in 1922-23, a muck and sand dike had been erected to protect farm fields from high-rising lake waters. When the hurricane hit in force, a surge in the storm waters collapsed the earthen dike and washed away houses, vehicles and people. It has been estimated that 150 people lost their lives in and around Moore Haven during this storm.

The hurricane on Sept. 16, 1928 was even more devastating to residents living along the shores of our lady's deceptive shimmering skirts.

Prior to this storm, it had rained almost continually during the month of August and into September. Between Aug. 8 and 13, nearly 14 inches of rain had fallen. It rained every day during the first 15 days of September. Rain gauges on the lake measured 21.5 inches for the month of September. Nine or more of those inches fell during the storm.

The elevation of the lake was over 16 feet and the Kissimmee River had risen from 17.8 in June to over 30 feet in August.

On the southern and southeastern shorelines of the lake, a levee had been constructed between 1923 and 1925. It had been built to prevent farm lands from being flooded by high lake levels. In the Lawrence Will book, Okeechobee Hurricane, Will stated, "Had there been no levee to pile up the water, there would have been no loss of life in either the hurricane of 1926 or 1928."

The levee extended from Pahokee past South Bay to Clewiston and for three miles beyond Moore Haven. The total length of the levee was approximately 47 miles.

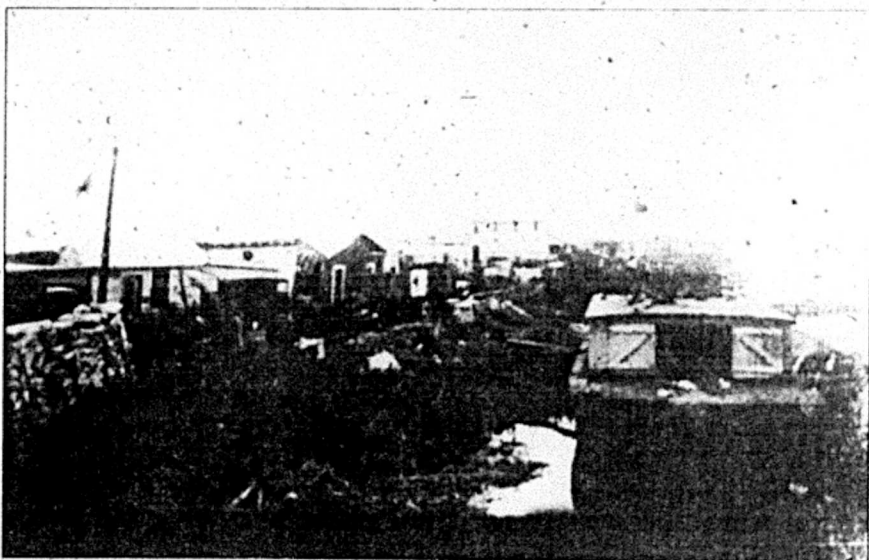
The hurricane, with extremely high winds, deluged the area with tons of rain, as well. The lake and Belle Glade first received the wind from the north and then

from the northwest. As the center passed, the wind returned from the south and southwest.

The waters piled up at one end of the lake by the velocity of the wind, then reversed themselves and slammed unchecked into the lake's northern end.

Will described what happened with the wind driven waters:

"In order to understand why the lake's waters, even though propelled by such incredible winds, could have surged over, tidal wave fashion, and inundated the land to a depth greater than the height of the levee, let us imagine Lake Okeechobee to be a large, shallow pan partly filled with water. The prolonged north wind would have the effect of tipping this pan, which would raise the water in the south end.



Devastation following the hurricane that hit the Lake Okeechobee area on Sept. 16, 1928 was total. Described as the fifth largest storm in history, more than 2,000 deaths resulted from it. This photo was from one of the areas along the south edge of the lake near Belle Glade. (Photo courtesy of Belle Glade Sun.)

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"The onslaught of the hurricane would tip the pan still further until the water reached the rim, or levee. Subsequent tipping, then, would precipitate a surge of water considerably higher than the top of the rim. Now, when the center of the storm had passed, the hurricane winds suddenly shifted from a northerly to a southerly direction. The imaginary pan was tilted in the opposite direction and the lake bottom here, which previously had been nearly dry for miles, was quickly inundated. The water, by the engineer's measurements, reached the same heights here it had previously been in South Bay. Due, however, to the configuration of the eastern shore between Bacorn's Point and Chancey Bay, which was parallel to the direction of the flow, fairly straight and with a steeper slope, the water along this stretch did not reach excessive heights.

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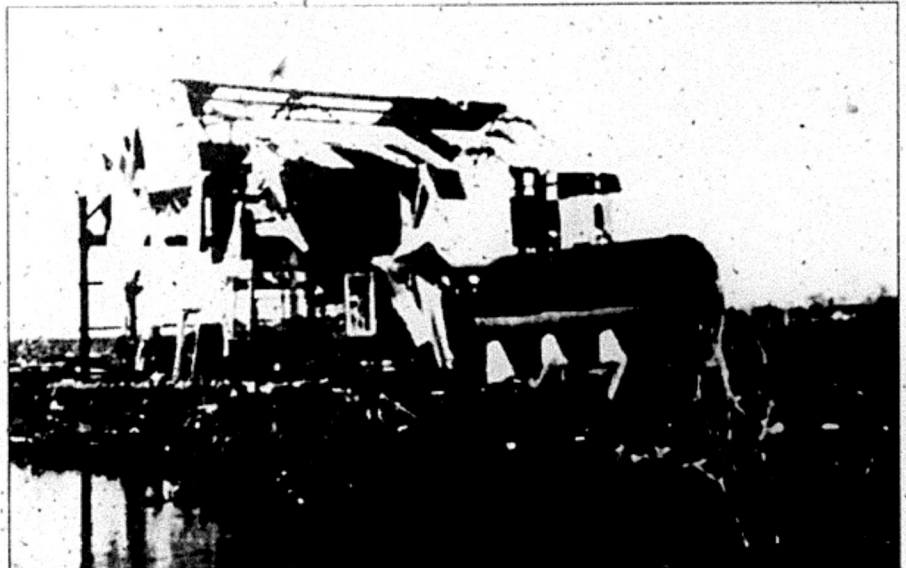
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## Chapter Five

With the storm and flooding that plagued central and southern Florida through the late 1920s and beyond, into the 1940s and 1950s, residents moving into the area began to seek relief from periodic flood waters, which caused loss of lives, crops, livestock and real estate.

A particularly wet hurricane and excessive flooding throughout the Kissimmee River basin in 1947, and particularly along the Gold Coast sections of Palm Beach and Broward counties, brought more cries of protest from Florida residents.

In 1948, Congress heard the pleas of Floridians from Orlando south to Miami, and they adopted the Central and South Florida Flood Control project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was given the task of designing and building a flood control system.

The following year, 1949, the Florida Legislature created the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District, and it was assigned the mission of managing water and related resources for the benefit of the public and in keeping with the needs of the region.

The northern shoreline of Lake Okeechobee contained dense stands of water oak, maple, cypress, popash, rubber and palmetto trees. For about 30 miles north of the lake, there were prairie lands, more commonly called savannahs by local residents, and pine forests. The savannahs contained wire grass and sedge, which became excellent grazing grounds for the hundreds of wild cattle which roamed the lands, and were to later provide the basis for one of the area's largest industries, cattle ranching. The prairies were unbroken except for patches of the pines in



For many years following the 1928 hurricane, farmers attempting to till their fields would find the remains of victims of that storm. This photo was taken several years after the 1928 storm. (Photo courtesy of the Belle Glade Sun)

flat woods, most of which were pitchy pines, some extending their branches skyward to a height of 75 to 100 feet.

They were also dotted with numerous small pools which were named according to the type of growth found in them. For example, there were sawgrass ponds, flag ponds, and maiden cane ponds. In places, heads of cypress and small trees were growing in shallow sloughs.

Meandering through these prairies and beyond, stretching northward for a distance of more than 100 miles was the scenic Kissimmee River.

Extending back from the river to a depth of one to two miles was a wide floodplain. This floodplain served multiple ecological purposes. It supported a highly productive food web and provided a habitat for wading birds, waterfowl, and an array of wildlife. The floodplain covered some 44,000 acres according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service records of the early periods.

The prairies, gifted with 55 to 60 inches of annual rainfall, had standing water to a depth of several inches for parts of the year. Today, this area is more familiarly known as the Kissimmee River



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# Basin and floodplain.

Water levels fluctuated normally with the seasons and there was a flow through the twisting and turning oxbows for most of the year. This feature had a dominant influence on the river/floodplain ecosystem.

The entire floodplain and wetland habitat provided for many species of wildlife. Early travelers on the river might catch sight of bald eagles, who used the area for breeding. They might catch a glimpse of the Florida panther who called the area home. More than 20 species of ducks lived in this area along the beautiful twisting, serpentine river, as did migratory waterfowl during the winter months. At least 15 species of wading birds, including large flocks of white ibis, dotted the landscape.

The waters of the river itself, whose pristine water quality was assured by the flow of waters through the cleansing wetlands, contained 39 fish species, including at least 10 gamefish species.

The main inhabitants on the river in the early 1800s were the U.S. Army outposts at Fort Basinger and Fort Kissimmee, established during the Seminole Indian Wars.

The first change in this unique waterway came in the late 1800s when the Disston Land Company dredged a navigable waterway through the river from the town of Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee. In the process, they also cut canals

between many lakes in central Florida, lowering their levels by as much as nine to 11 feet. The water flowed southward through the twisting Kissimmee River system into the lake.

With the open waterway navigable all the way to the lake, steamships began to provide access to the interior of the state. While some families were reported along the upper reaches river in the 1870s, Disston's dredging operation opened up the river and it became the equivalent of the major north/south transportation artery prior to the turn of the century. Families began moving further into the interior of central Florida via the river.

He also dredged an opening from the lake to the Caloosahatchee River and opened up travel from the lake all the way to present-day Fort Myers on Florida's west coast.

Cattlemen from other sections of the state, and from Georgia, moved into the area in the mid-1870s, seeking more land on which to let their herds graze. A thriving, bustling community was soon established on the banks of the river, near the site of the old military installation, Fort Basinger.

On the east side of the river, the community of Basinger, with a ferry across the river, soon drew many new settlers to homesites along the river. One of the first of these was Capt. John Mizell Pearce, the man who started the ferry service in 1875. He built his home in 1870



Workers after the 1926 storm in Clewiston work in knee-deep water for more than a week following the storm.



Clewiston was once more hit with a violent hurricane and heavy rainfall during the summer of 1947.



This photo of the main street in Moore Haven after the 1926 hurricane shows the flooding and damage which that community sustained. Mertie Van de Velde of Moore Haven and Lakeport was on the second floor of Moore Haven's hotel when it left its foundation and began floating down the street.



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## Page 16 - Lady of Mystery

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The Raulerson family made that move in 1910 and Ossie recalled there were only five or six houses located in Tantie at that time. During a storm in 1910, the home into which they had moved was blown off its pier foundation. The piers were wooden logs that supported the frame of the home and raised it above the high water line.

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For many years, the Kissimmee River was the major "highway" through central Florida.

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In 1962, against the wishes of many landowners in the Kissimmee River Valley, the Corps began the huge project of channelizing the once meandering 100-mile-long Kissimmee River.

The C-38 canal was 58 miles long, about 30 feet in depth, with a width that varied from 325 to 700 feet, and the waters flowed unimpeded into the lake.

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## Chapter 6

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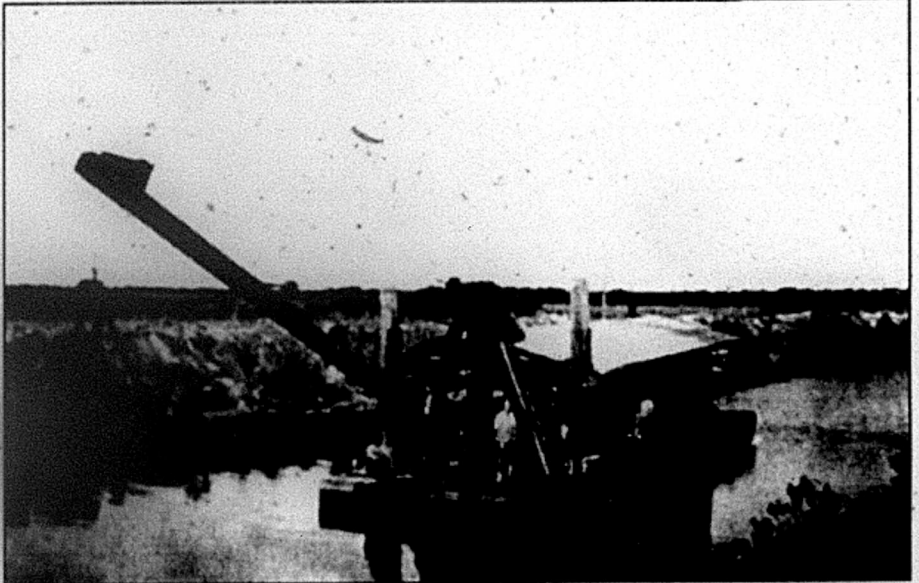
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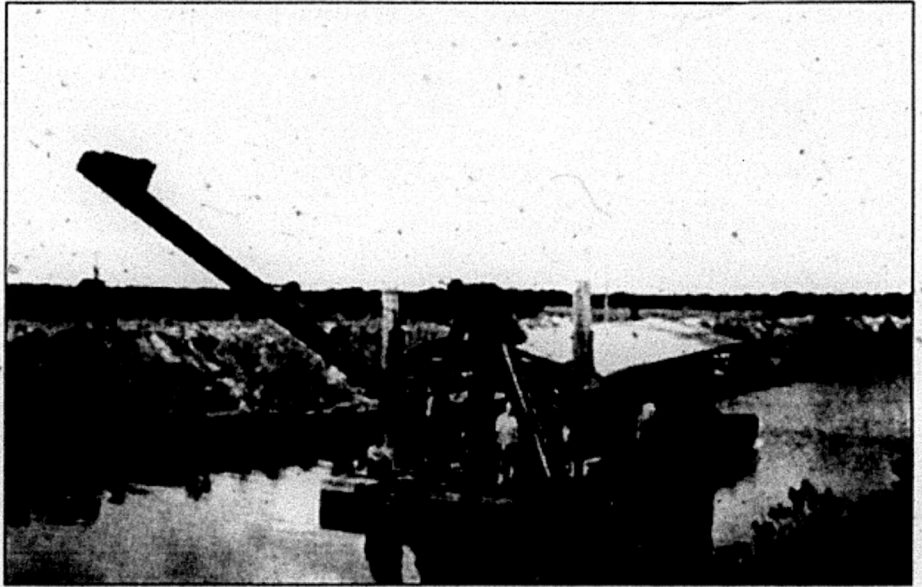
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on what is today the Highlands County side of the river, and it was located about a mile-and-a-half from Fort Bassinger. Several years later, he built a larger home, just a few hundred feet from the Kissimmee River.

Local, old-time residents, like the late-Thelma Holmes Walker, a native of Fort Drum in northern Okeechobee County, recalled during a 1989 interview the trips she made as a child on the old steamboats from Micco Bluff to the burgeoning town of Kissimmee. The trips were made to visit family members in Orlando.

The steamboats were captained by Captain Clay Johnson, a Mark Twain look-alike, and he had three boats named the Cincinnati, the Roseada, and the Osceola. The boats not only carried passengers, but were the settlers' lifeline to the outside world and carried all the supplies they needed to sustain life in the wilderness. The boats also served as mailman, retail store, grocer and newspaper.

The late-Ossie Raulerson recalled how his family moved by boat from their home on the banks of the Kissimmee River at a spot called Wood Landing, through the lake into Taylor Creek, and into the new town of Tantie, now called Okeechobee. Wood Landing was a stop on the river where steamboats landed to pick up loads of wood.

The Raulerson family made that move in 1910 and Ossie recalled there were only five or six houses located in Tantie at that time. During a storm in 1910, the home into which they had moved was blown off its pier foundation. The piers were wooden logs that supported the frame of the home and raised it above the high water line.

Members of the Lightsey family also arrived on the northern shores of Lake

Okeechobee by the same method. Their homestead was near present-day State Road 78, on the shores of Eagle Bay.

For many years, the Kissimmee River was the major "highway" through central Florida.

By the 1920s and the advent of roads throughout the state, the need for the river steamboats came to an end.

In 1962, against the wishes of many landowners in the Kissimmee River Valley, the Corps began the huge project of channelizing the once meandering 100-mile-long Kissimmee River.

The C-38 canal was 58 miles long, about 30 feet in depth, with a width that varied from 325 to 700 feet, and the waters flowed unimpeded into the lake.

The project also installed six flood control structures with adjacent locks at intervals along the canal.

The old oxbows became non-productive with lack of water flow, and thousands of acres of wetlands were drained. The project took ten years and was completed in 1971.

The Corps began to manage the level of waters in the upper chain of lakes near Orlando, the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee. They control those levels even today.

Flood control structures, similar to those on the river and at the outlets from the lake, were also installed throughout the southern part of the state in an effort to manage the waters. These actions, coupled with earlier man-made intrusions, completely changed forever the face of our beautiful lady, and the major source of her incoming waters.

People who lived on the river and who had enjoyed its waters and bountiful wildlife and fish harvest were

appalled at the destruction to the area with the channelization.

But, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was evident that Mother Nature had healed her own wounds.

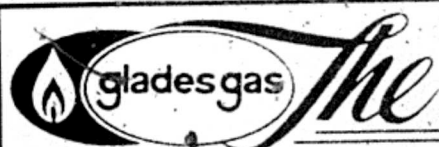
Fishing in the river was once again bountiful. Many forms of wildlife were inventoried in the area.

There were increasing numbers of blue heron and bald eagles documented along the channelized stretch of the river.

It was not the ecosystem that had existed prior to channelization of the river, but an entirely new ecosystem had established itself, bringing back not only old friends in the wildlife community, but some new ones found their names on the inventory list as well.



This memorial to the victims of the 1928 hurricane stands in front of the Belle Glade Municipal Library and honors the more than 2,000 victims of the hurricane. (Photo courtesy of the Belle Glade Sun)



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## Chapter 6

The channelization of the Kissimmee River was barely completed when the cries for restoration began to be heard from environmental groups. Governor Ruben Askew convened the Conference on Water Management in South Florida in 1971.

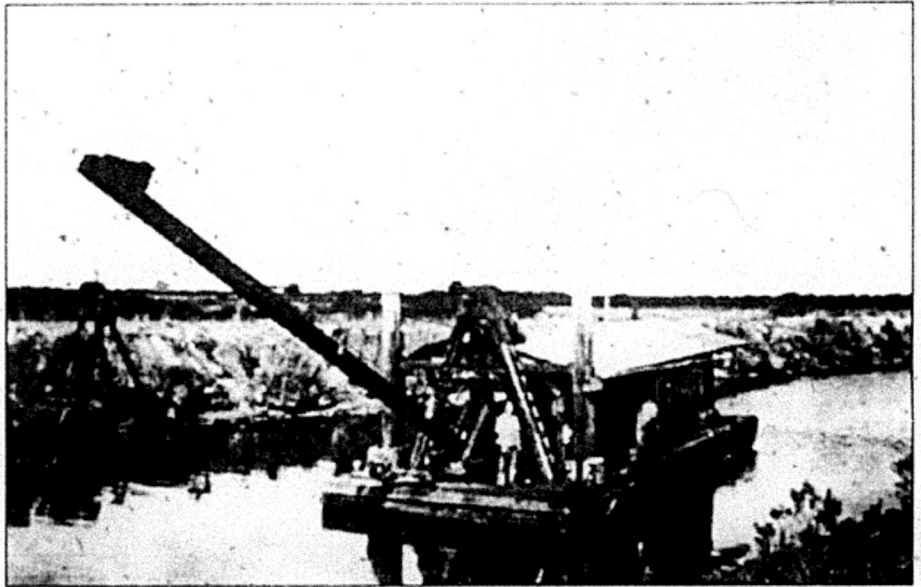
Those attending that meeting concluded, "The Kissimmee lakes and marshes should be restored to their historic conditions and levels to the greatest extent possible to improve the quality of the water entering Lake Okeechobee."

In 1976, the first study group, the Coordinating Council on the Restoration of the Kissimmee River Valley, was formed. Since then, studies have been conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD, renamed from the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District); the Kissimmee River Resource Planning and Management Committee, the Lake Okeechobee Technical Advisory Committee, the University of Florida, and the University of California at Berkeley.

In the midst of all the studies, the environmental groups became even more vocal, and stating that only the complete backfilling of the C-38 canal would be acceptable.

In 1983, Governor Bob Graham created a coordinating council of several state agencies to oversee the restoration and preservation of the various ecosystems and natural resources throughout the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades system. This action was taken in conjunction with his Save Our Everglades and Save Our Rivers projects.

Those agencies, in addition to the SFWMD, included the Department of Environmental Regulation, the Department of Community Affairs, the Department of



Dredges such as this older model were used to dig the rim canal around the perimeter of the Herbert Hoover Dike, as well as the various canals leading from Lake Okeechobee to the coast. Today, more water is lost through these canals to tide than what flow southward into the Everglades. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District)



A more modern dredge was used to channelize the Kissimmee River during the 1960s. This operation turned the meandering 103-mile river into a 52-mile channel, commonly referred to as the C-38 canal. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District)



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Transportation, the Department of Natural Resources, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

A demonstration project on a 12-mile stretch of the Kissimmee River was begun by the district in 1984 and completed a year later.

Three sheet metal weirs, with navigation notches, were installed in Pool B at the upper end of the river. The specific goal of the project was to test the feasibility of returning the river to its pre-canal condition.

These devices were designed to force water back through the old twists, turns and bends of the river, and to restore some of the nutrient filtering properties which existed on the river before channelization. The district also controlled the fluctuation of the water levels in Pool B to simulate the normal wet and dry seasons.

The project produced results beyond the initial expectations of the water management officials.

The quality of the waters flowing through the old oxbows improved dramatically. Wildlife, particularly some of the waterfowl, returned to the area, district officials claimed.

A feasibility study by the Corps on restoration, which was completed in 1985, recommended no federal action be taken regarding the restoration effort.

If the floodplains are restored, the district scientists maintain, the sponge effect for filtering waters will be re-instated, aerating and cleansing the waters before they flow into the lake.

In 1988, Dr. Hsieh Shen, an international expert in sedimentation and environmental river mechanics with the University of California at Berkeley, completed his studies on the possibility of restoring the once meandering river. His studies have involved duplicating a section of the old river from

Pool B with both physical and computer models, to see what the effects of proposed restoration efforts would be.

Dr. Shen's final report was delivered to the governing board in October 1989.

His studies produced four alternatives which he explained in his final report. They were:

1) The first alternative would continue the use of weirs, but ones without navigation notches. They would, however, contain gates which could be lowered during flooding periods to release waters more quickly.

2) The second alternative would be the use of earthen plugs, which would produce the same effect as the weirs in forcing the flow of waters back into the old twisting, turning oxbows. This would permit no flexibility during times of flooding, Dr. Shen said.

3) Backfilling at what Dr. Shen calls Level I is the third alternative.

This method would fill in longer lengths of the C-38 canal and it is estimated that this method would open up about 2,000 acres of the old floodplain.

4) The final alternative is Backfilling at Level II. This would backfill the channel as much as possible. Under this alternative about 30 miles of the 52-mile-long canal would be filled in. This includes all of Pool A near S.R. 60 in Osceola County, the upper part of Pool B, located about 12 miles down river, and the area upstream of structure, S-65-E, the last structure on the river before it enters Lake Okeechobee.

Kent Loftin, who was then the project engineer for the Kissimmee River restoration for the WMD, said that if this plan were adopted, they would start in the middle of the river and fill up and down as much as possible, while still retaining the flood control capabilities.

Mr. Loftin's recommendations, and that of other members of the district staff, were contained in a proposed restoration plan for the Kissimmee River which the district pub-

lished in the early part of 1990. That report recommended the Level II backfilling as the alternative chosen by district staff.

The Kissimmee River provides 30 percent of the water flowing into the north end of Lake Okeechobee. During the intervening years from 1983 through 1990, the district had maintained that the restoration was necessary to restore the degraded water quality in the Kissimmee River.

With the completion of the district's restoration plan, Mr. Loftin and district staff stated at the beginning of the report that the restoration efforts were being undertaken for "aesthetic" reasons only.

The report admitted that 30 percent of the water flowing into Lake Okeechobee was nearly as clean as rain water, and the cleanest of all the tributaries flowing into the lake.

The water quality in the river is still rated very good. Only four percent of the nutrients flowing into the lake come through the river waters.

The forcing of the waters back through the oxbows and across the marshes, would cleanse the waters even more, according to claims by the district scientists.

When district personnel refers to water quality on the Kissimmee River, they are normally referring to the dissolved oxygen levels in the waterway. If there is no flow to aerate the water, the lowering of the oxygen in the water can cause massive fish kills.

A 1989 publication from the district itemizes what they hope the effect of complete restoration will be for the ecosystem:

\*Provide favorable conditions for endangered plant species.

\*Re-establish waterfowl usage of the floodplain.

\*Restore wading bird utilization of floodplain, particularly for the endangered wood stork and the threatened sandhill crane.

\*Restore food base for bald eagles and the wading bird and fish food chains.

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\*Increase the spawning, nursery, and feeding habitat for fish species.

The restoration would also decrease the need for control of instream vegetation and the chemical pollution associated with that activity.

There would be an increase of the water quality, and an opportunity for increased aesthetic quality of recreational boating.

It would eliminate river siltation and restore characteristic biological communities.

Following the release of the South Florida Water Management District's Kissimmee River Restoration Plan, district officials entered into negotiations with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for them to participate in the project as the lead agency.

Backed by Florida Senator Bob Graham, authorization for the plan nearly made it through the Congressional process in 1990, but was removed from the budget at the last minute by the Bush administration.

Interest in the project in Washington, fueled by Sen. Graham, progressed to the point that Congress authorized a second feasibility study to be done by the Corps, and that study was to be based on implementing the district's Level II Backfilling plan.

The draft of that study was made public at the end of September 1991, and stirred up new controversy all over again.

The plan called for total backfilling of 29 miles of the C-38 canal in the Lower Kissimmee River Basin, using fill from spoilbanks that was removed by the Corps when the canal was created, recreating some 11.6 miles of new river channel to approximate the former oxbows, and hopefully, to recreate some 29,000 acres of wetlands to provide fishery and wildlife habitat.

According to the Corps study, about 394 homes would be taken under the Level II Backfilling Plan, as well as five dairies with property close to the river, or in sloughs

which would be in the newly restored floodplains and wetlands.

Three of the flood control structures would be completely eliminated leaving no flood protection for thousands of acres in Okeechobee, Highlands and Glades counties.

Opponents of the plan noted that no sociological impact study had been done regarding the people who would be displaced.

No economic impact was considered either in the Corps study or the district's restoration plan for what the backfilling of the 29 miles of river channel would do to the area economy.

The Corps proposed that it would need to acquire nearly 68,000 acres of Kissimmee River basin property to restore approximately 29,000 acres of wetlands.

The reason for the extra acreage became apparent when the report revealed the Corps planned water levels which would be approximately six feet higher than historical high water levels before restoration. Subdivisions along

## Lady of Mystery - Page 19

the river, in place before the channelization, and which were never flooded prior to the C-38 canal, would now be flooded.

Grass roots opposition groups sprang up within subdivisions up and down the river. County officials in Okeechobee and Highlands counties began writing, petitioning and protesting not only to district and Corps personnel, but to Congressional representatives, as well.

The final study was completed by the Corps in the Jacksonville office in December 1991 and is currently being reviewed in Washington by Corps officials.

The study was sent to Congress in 1992. It was voted on and the project was authorized. The project was estimated to cost about \$800 million and to take between 10 and 15 years to complete.

Funding was delayed because of the 1991-92 economic slump. It has since been funded and actual construction is due to begin in 1998, pending final maps from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



This aerial shot shows the original twisting Kissimmee River, "snaking" through the prairies and savannahs of south central Florida emptying into Lake Okeechobee. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District)

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## Chapter Seven

In September 1947, a series of exceptionally wet hurricane storms passed over south and central Florida, including the lake. While the winds did minimal damage the tremendous amount of water left the southern half of the Florida peninsula standing in water. Waters poured into the lake from all its tributaries and from the storm itself, and the level of the lake was recorded at its highest elevation—over 20 feet. Damage to the levee was negligible.

As the shoreline around the lake became settled, agriculture, for many years, was the main industry in what has since become the five-county area of Glades, Hendry, Martin, Okeechobee and Palm Beach counties.

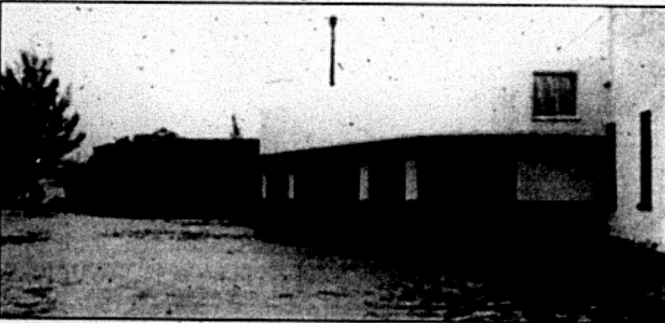
Because of the semi-tropical climate to the south of the lake, and the rich black muck soils, farming was the major activity there, and for a distance up both the eastern and western shorelines.

Commercial fishing exploded around the turn of the century, but lack of controls and over fishing caused that industry to fade after a couple of decades.

On the northeastern, northwestern and northern edges of the lake, the beef cattle industry has thrived since just after the Civil War.

Early settlers, mainly from Georgia, found the state rich with wild cattle permeating the scrub, hence the name "scrub cattle."

The speculation has been that the cattle were brought into the state by escaping Indians and slaves and then abandoned by them. Through the years, they reproduced and by the late 1860's, they provided the basis for many of the later herds of the wealthy cattle barons.



Stores along U.S. Highway 27, the main thoroughfare through the community of Clewiston, had an up close waterfront view after the 1947 storm.



This view of Clewiston shows damaged homes and downed trees when the 1947 hurricane roared through that community.

By 1870, settlers and their cattle herds were reported as far south as the Caloosahatchee River.

The first of these cattle families arrived in the Kissimmee River Valley and formed the community of Basinger, some 20 miles north of the lake. The names of those early settlers, Pearce, Raulerson, Holmes, Chandler, Alderman, Walker and Underhill, are still leading names in the beef cattle industry some 130 years later.

In the early days, the cattle were rounded up from the open prairies, where no fences existed, branded and driven to the markets in Punta Gorda and Tampa, on the west coast, then taken by boat, and subsequently train to the northern markets. Cattle from the eastern side of the lake were driven to Fort Pierce where they were loaded on boats headed north. These drives could take from a week to a month, depending on the whims of Mother Nature.

Thelma Holmes Walker, an 87-year-old Fort Drum native, recalls hearing stories from her father, husband, and uncles of how swarms of mosquitoes would cause the cattle to stampede, and many head of cattle would be lost.

In the book, "Lake Okeechobee: Wellspring of the Everglades," by Alfred and Kathryn Hanna, they report that some of the same type mosquito swarms would fill the mouths and nostrils of the cattle, suffocating them to death.

Sudden storms, swamps, snakes, and panthers also took



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their toll on the cattle drives. But, the hardy "cracker" cowboys prevailed.

The arrival of the railroads in the lake area at Moore Haven and Okeechobee in the teens provided a new form of transportation for getting the cattle to market. The color and pageantry of the cattle drives faded into memory.

The beef cattle industry today comprises nearly 368,000 head of cattle in the five counties surrounding Lake Okeechobee and provides over \$170 million to the economies of these counties. Glades, Hendry and Okeechobee counties have about 58,000 head of beef cattle according to the United States Census of Agriculture statistics for 1996.

In the current controversy of agriculture versus the health of our lady of the shimmering skirts, the beef cattle industry is rather low on the list of agricultural activities supposedly adding excessive nutrients to the waters of the lake. Beef cattle range over a much larger area of pasture-

land than do dairy cattle which are confined in small spaces.

Dairy farms have been classified as high intensity use areas, and as such, were targeted by governmental agencies as the primary target of phosphorus overloading which they claim is destroying the waters of the lake.

During the 1950's, land values in Dade and Broward counties to the south escalated in the post-war building boom. Many dairy farms were located in the western reaches of those two counties and developers soon pushed the agricultural interests from the scene.

Some of those operations first migrated into Palm Beach County, where they soon found land development once more squeezing them out.

By the early part of the 1960's nearly 50 dairies had settled in the counties around Lake Okeechobee, with the majority of them settling in Okeechobee County at the northern tip of the lake. By the late 1970's, the

bovine population of beef and dairy cattle outnumbered the human population by a six to one ratio. The two industries provide over \$300 million in revenues annually to the counties around the lake. Okeechobee County alone estimates \$281 million in revenues, and more than 1700 jobs are provided from the two sources.

The dairy operations are mainly concentrated in the northern and eastern areas of the county in what is called the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough watershed. Data collected and released by the South Florida Water Management District claims that while this area contributes only about three percent of the water entering Lake Okeechobee, it contributes some 29 percent of the phosphorus that enters the lake waters.

There are a few dairy operations located in the lower Kissimmee River valley, but while this waterway provides a third of the waters entering the lake, it is claimed only some four percent of the phosphorus enters the lake through this watershed.

Several years ago, in 1981, the Rural Clean Water Program initiated Best Management Practices (BMP's) which are methods and structures designed to keep cattle waste from entering waterways directly and untreated. This voluntary program was a combined effort where funding for the installation of BMP's was provided by the federal government (58%), the state (17%), and the dairy owner (25%). According to Loren Boggs, U.S. Soil Conservation Service, 24 dairies participated in that program and their initial BMP's are in place at a cost of \$1.6 million.

Following installation of these



The beef cattle industry is an important part of the Okeechobee County economy.

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## Page 22 - Lady of Mystery

BMPs, no one followed up with measurements of nutrient runoff, so their effectiveness was never measured.

A massive algae bloom on Lake Okeechobee in August, 1986 focused nationwide attention on the lake, and claims were made and argued by the scientific community and environmental groups that something was seriously amiss in the 730 square mile lake.

It became apparent that the dairy industry at the northern end of the lake would have the finger of blame pointed in its direction as the source of phosphorus overloading to the lake.

The Everglades Agricultural Area, with its more than 700,000 acres of vegetables and sugar cane became a secondary target for contributing excessive amounts of nitrogen from the watershed from these areas.

In early 1987, the state Department of Environmental Regulation (DER) adopted the Dairy Rule. In the simplest terms, the Rule requires dairies to fence cows away from streams, build holding ponds or lagoons to catch barn washings and wastewater must be treated or used to irrigate pastures rather than be released into waterways that lead into Lake Okeechobee. The rule established an April, 1991 deadline for the installation of these BMPs.

These new mandatory BMPs are sophisticated and expensive. Estimates for their design and installation run from \$250-\$400 per cow. Many small dairies just did not have the acreage necessary for the installation of extensive lagoon systems and holding ponds.

The State Department of Agriculture and WMD initiated a buy out program for those dairies who were unable to secure loans or who did not have enough land for the BMPs. Under this

program, dairy farmers were offered a combined \$602 per cow to sell or relocate the herds. One dairy in Glades County and nine in Okeechobee County took advantage of the buy out program. The ceasing of operations by November, 1989 will reduce the number of dairy cows in the area by 6,610 with an estimated loss of about 100 jobs. Based on 1986 figures, this will translate into an annual loss of revenues of about \$34 million to Okeechobee and Glades counties.

Melear Farms, Ralph Rucks and W.F. Rucks dairies moved their operations to Georgia.

The two operations of Brighton Dairy moved their operation to Hardee County, although their base of operations will remain in Okeechobee County.

All the dairies had to have their

plans filed by June 3, 1989 and Mr. Boggs said that all the dairies met that deadline. The next deadline they had was to have the BMPs implemented by the 1991 cut off.

While most of the dairies made the deadline, the rest did complete their projects by the end of 1992.

The results have been that with minor exceptions, all of the dairies are currently meeting their standards for the phosphorus content in the runoff from their farms. A few of the farms have what is termed "hot spots" where efforts to reduce the phosphorus content have not yet been successful.

Personnel and scientists are working with the dairy farmers in those locations to identify the source of the extra phosphorus, and to find the necessary solution to reduce the nutrient content to acceptable levels.



Dairies have implemented Best Management Practices to reduce the amount of phosphorus in runoff. Pictured above is a feed barn at Larson Dairy. (Photo by Chris Couden)

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## Chapter 8

Dairy farms are classified as high intensity use areas, and as such, have been targeted by governmental agencies as the primary target of phosphorus overloading which they claim is destroying the waters of the lake.

During the 1950's, land values in Dade and Broward counties to the south escalated in the post-war building boom. Many dairy farms were located in the western reaches of those two counties and developers soon pushed the agricultural interests from the scene.

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By the late 1970's, the bovine population of beef and dairy cattle outnumbered the human population by a 6 to 1 ratio in the counties around the lake.

The two industries provide over \$300 million in revenues annually to these counties. Okeechobee County alone estimates \$281 million in revenues, and more than 1700 jobs are provided from the two sources.

The dairy operations are mainly concentrated in the northern end of the county and in the eastern areas in what is called the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough watershed.

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The rule established an April, 1991 deadline for the installation of these BMPs.

These new mandatory BMPs are sophisticated and expensive. In practice,

most of the dairies have spent in excess of \$1 million per barn to implement the BMPs. Many small dairies just did not have the acreage necessary for the installation of extensive lagoon systems and holding ponds.

The State Department of Agriculture and SFWMD, through the Lake Okeechobee Surface Water Improvement and Management Plan (SWIM) initiated a buyout program for those dairies who were unable to secure loans or who did not have enough land for the BMPs.

Under this program, dairy farmers were offered a combined \$602 per cow to sell or re-locate their herds.

To date, 19 of the area's 49 dairies have opted for the buyout program. Of these, several have moved cows, equipment and employees to the state of Georgia.

Several moved their operation to other counties away from the the Lake Okeechobee and Kissimmee River basins.

The remaining farms have simply sold off their cattle and closed down operations completely.

The economic loss to Okeechobee County has been estimated at \$54.3 million according to a 1992 study from the University of Florida by William G. Boggess, John Holt, and Robert P. Smithwick.

Prior to the buyout program, gross revenues from milk sales were in excess of \$100 million annually in Okeechobee County. The buyout reduced those revenues by \$34 million or one-third of the total milk production.

The report claims that the buyout program has resulted in a loss of 531 full-time jobs in the area and earnings losses in excess of \$10.2 million. The earnings

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prior to the buyout were \$29.8 million.

Prior to the buyout in 1989, the dairy industry provided 1,549 full-time jobs in the Okeechobee County area.

Dr. Holt's report states that of the dairies remaining in business, the loss of revenues through reduction in wholesale milk prices, decrease in milk production as a result of implementing the BMPs, and loans to accomplish the construction, will leave about one in five dairy farmers going out of business within the next five years for strictly financial reasons.

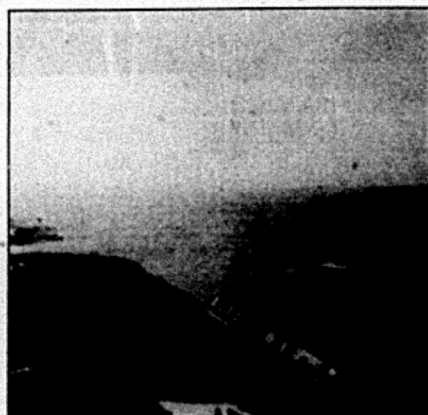
Those who chose to remain in business within the basin, had to have their plans for the implementation of the BMPs filed with the federal and state

agencies by June 3, 1989.

All the dairies met that deadline, but there are still a few dairies under construction who failed to meet the April 1991 deadline required by the law, but have received extensions of time for construction and implementation.

Dr. Holt's report, released in December 1991, claims that the net effect of the revenue losses per cow during the construction of the BMPs averaged about \$352 per cow, or \$369,000 per dairy. Dr. Holt said that rule compliance will cost the dairies an average of \$1,179 per cow, or \$1.2 million per dairy.

He said this is an increase in cost of \$1.10 per hundredweight of milk pro-



This photo reveals more of the devastation that occurred in Belle Glade during the 1928 hurricane.



Work on the levee around Lake Okeechobee began soon after the beginning of the Great Depression, so work was available during the worst of the depression years. Work on the levee was no easy task as man, mule and plow were used on a job where the hours were long and the work was hard.



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## Chapter 9

A massive algae bloom on Lake Okeechobee in August, 1986 focused nationwide attention on the lake, and claims were made and argued by the scientific community and environmental groups that something was seriously amiss in the 730-square-mile lake.

More than 120 square miles of the shimmering waters were covered with algae. Of the more than 25,000 kinds of algae, this particular outbreak was identified as "anabaena circinalis," a blue-green algae which can be considered deadly to aquatic life, since it robs the water's oxygen during its decomposition.

This incident caused an outpouring by the environmental groups demanding that action be taken to save what they considered to be a "dying" lake.

Members of groups like the Audubon



In 1994, the South Florida Water Management District, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, constructed an 1000-foot "test plug" just upstream from the flood control structure S-65-B on the C-38 Canal. The plug was a test to see if the waters flowing down the Kissimmee could be forced back into the now-stagnant oxbows. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District)

Society, the Sierra Clubs and the Florida Wildlife Federation were interviewed and quoted regularly on the nightly news.

Scientists flocked to the lake's shores to begin a myriad of studies on the lake and the fish and plant inhabitants.

Shortly after, then-Gov. Bob Graham issued an executive order which demanded that immediate action be taken to start clean-up efforts.

But some lake area residents maintained that politics, not ecology, motivated the media circus.

Algae blooms have been common on Lake Okeechobee for more than 20 years and scientific evidence claims that approximately 200 different varieties have been

recorded within the 730 square miles of the lake.

Some cite the algae blooms as a sort of fever signal warning there is something significantly amiss with the lake.

Algae are not all "bad." They basically support aquatic life by providing a food source for the zooplankton at the bottom of the food chain.

Zooplankton are the tiny worms, insect larvae and other minute animals.

There are a few types of algae which can give off toxins that kill fish, snails and other water creatures.

But, the most common danger from an algae bloom is its ability to rob the water of life-giving oxygen.



These limpkins take a stroll along the shoreline of Lake Okeechobee, obviously seeking their favorite food, a freshwater snail. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District)



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Scientists claim that increases in the number of algae blooms each year signifies that more pollutants are entering the waters of the lake than the lake is able to handle in a natural manner through absorption.

While some members of the scientific community pointed their finger toward the natural causes of several centuries of vegetation settling at the bottom of the lake, other scientists were quick to place the blame on the human element.

It became apparent that the dairy industry at the northern end of the lake would have the finger of blame pointed in its direction as the source of phosphorus overloading to the lake.

The Everglades Agricultural Area, with its more than 700,000 acres of vegetables and sugar cane became a secondary target for contributing excessive amounts of nitrogen from the watershed from these areas.

Those who are advocating the lake is dying claim these nutrients act as fertilizers to encourage the algae blooms.

Scientists concluded that the increased algae blooms on Lake Okeechobee were a result of the increases of phosphorus and nitrogen.

The increase in those nutrients, they claim, came from the dairy farms at the north end of the lake and from the agricultural farms which rimmed the southern end.

The environmentalists were quick to support the scientific community, and they began lobbying at all levels of government for action to be taken.

The battle lines were drawn!

The Lake Okeechobee Technical Advisory Committee (LOTAC) formed a year earlier at the direction of Graham, had been charged with the task of "...conducting a study of the various conditions that may affect the water conser-

vation and quality, and biological characteristics of Lake Okeechobee and make recommendations to protect and improve the lake."

The governor made the Department of Environmental Regulation the lead governmental agency for the committee along with the South Florida Water Management District, and the governor said the committee should include "...consideration of the interests of federal, state and appropriate local government, agri-

cultural and other users, environmentalists and sportsmen and other interests as may be appropriate."

The final committee represented a cross section from private citizen, to college professor, to environmentalist, to dairyman, to governmental agency representatives, to federal agency representatives. Along with four sub-committees, the group labored intensively for a year to issue a final report of recommendations.



In this historic photograph, former president Herbert Hoover and the great Seminole Indian Chief Billy Bowlegs III, exchanged greetings at the dedication of the Herbert Hoover Dike which completely encircled Lake Okeechobee by January 1961, more than 30 years after the first parts of the dike were constructed on the southern and southeastern shores of Lake Okeechobee.



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## Chapter 10

The Florida Department of Environmental Regulation (DER) was charged by the governor in the mid-1980s to form the LOTAC committee. The charge given to this committee was to examine all available evidence relating to the problems of Lake Okeechobee and to make recommendations for solving those problems. Their recommendations were contained in a three-way approach: research, demonstration projects and data collection.

Based on that report, the district was charged by the Florida Legislature in 1987 with designing and implementing the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan. The Legislature further directed "such program shall be based on the recommendations of the Lake Okeechobee Technical Advisory report entitled: "Final Report: Lake Okeechobee Technical Committee."

The final product was the 1989 SWIM Plan for Lake Okeechobee.

The goal of the SWIM Plan for Lake Okeechobee is to "manage the water and related resources of the lake for the purpose of providing water quality and environmental resource protection and enhancement, water supply, flood protection, navigational and recreational benefits for the public in keeping with the needs of the region."

The Plan has three main practical objectives. To develop methods to reduce the flow of nutrients to Lake Okeechobee is the first of these objectives. This includes the development of BMPs for on-farm nutrient management and examination of some regional nutrient management alternatives such as diversion and Aquifer Storage

and Recovery (ASR).

The second objective was to gain a better understanding of the distribution, role and dynamics of nutrients in the soil and the water column. This would allow the district to make adjustments to the implemented strategies or develop new strategies if the original ones proved inadequate. These studies are more of a long-term nature and most are still ongoing.

The third objective was to further refine the information on the impacts of nutrients and other constituents on the environment.

This purpose was to ensure that the current status of biological communities is adequately defined, to understand and verify what constituents and other factors are critical to these communities, and to track the responses of the communities to changes brought about by management strategies and other factors. These studies are also of a long-term nature.

The plan calls for dramatic reductions in the amount of nutrients going into Lake Okeechobee. Phosphorus must be reduced from 600 to 397 tons annually.

Other recommendations made by the LOTAC committee included:

\*Diversion of the waters from Taylor Creek-Nubbin Slough.

\*Implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP's) on dairies in Taylor Creek-Nubbin Slough and in the Kissimmee River Basin.

\*Restoration of the Kissimmee River and pool stage manipulation to recreate wetlands.

\*Improvement of the canal system in the Everglades Agricultural Area.

\*Use of the Holey Land reservoir as flow-through for EAA runoff.

\*Implementation of a Conservation/Drought Management Plan.

\*Implementation of an aquifer storage and recovery system.

Not everyone agreed with the findings of the original LOTAC Committee.

One group, in particular, the Florida Sugar Cane League, has consistently questioned the data used as the basis for the findings of this committee and the subsequent decisions made by the Water Management District.

"There's a misconception that data gathering when it goes on for a certain number of years is research. The information (gathered by SFWMD) was just for the purpose of having information and not for the purpose of answering certain questions. That went on in Lake Okeechobee for many years since the early 60s," said Ed Barber, an environmentalist with the Florida Sugar Cane League during a 1989 interview.

"Then, all of a sudden, this agency who was charged with keeping our feet dry and a water supply, and not much else, came into the arena of environmental protection. So, that data base became the basis for regulations. All of a sudden, data intended for one purpose was going to be used for another purpose. And that purpose was to decide if a farmer could farm, or a dairyman could operate his dairy, or a city sewage treatment plant could be allowed to work. So, we changed what this information was used for to regulatory," he said.

Agricultural interests seemingly stood alone against government agencies, environmental groups, and urban

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areas dependent on Lake Okeechobee as a backup water supply source for the lower east coast.

Under the SWIM Rules, agricultural interests to the north of the lake must reduce the runoff from their individual land holdings to 1.2 ppm. (parts per million), so that what enters the lake will be .18 ppm or less. These rules will also apply to residential incorporated and unincorporated communities which now ring the shoreline of the lake.

Again, millions of dollars have been spent in the past few years by state and local governments and private enterprise and the jury is still out on how well they will work. Estimates ran as high as \$100 million to implement the initial plan.

While the various state agencies and environmental groups were lobbying for more stringent requirements on dairy farmers at the north end of the lake in the late 1980s, they were also making a case against the large area south of the lake which is known as the Everglades Agricultural Area.

This large area of winter vegetables and sugar cane ringing the southwestern, southern and southeastern shores of our lady is one of the richest agricultural areas in the nation.

In sugar cane alone, 417,000 acres of cane were harvested in the 1995 growing season. This sugar cane was grown in Glades, Hendry, Martin and Palm Beach counties. This was down from the 443,000 acres harvested just five years earlier.

Seven mills located in Hendry and Palm Beach counties processed the 14.45 million tons of cane. This represents approximately 47 percent of the sugar produced in the United States.

The sugar industry provides employment for 3,600 full-time workers, 2,900

part-time workers, and 9,100 seasonal workers. According to studies from the University of Florida, the sugar industry alone generates over \$1.5 billion dollars of economic activity and over 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs, not including 9,100 offshore cane cutters.

At the beginning of 1992, the district had some 22 research programs and 10 demonstration projects in process as part of the SWIM Plan. Some of the research programs and studies that have been and are currently being done include:

- Kissimmee River Tributary Management

This study was to study and develop management systems for Chandler Slough, Yates Marsh and the Maple River tributary systems and floodplain:

The Yates Marsh plan recommended installation of BMPs on three dairies, reestablishment of 1,500 acres of floodplain wetlands through construction of a flow-through marsh, protection of 1,450 acres of existing tributary wetlands through the regulatory process, and the re-routing of runoff through existing and reestablished wetlands for secondary treatment.

The Chandler Slough plan recommended installation of BMPs on four dairies, enhancement of 2,700 acres of floodplain wetlands through pool stage fluctuation and degradation of levees, and protection of 735 acres of existing tributary wetlands through the regulatory process.

The BMPs were implemented through the DER Dairy Rule.

- Assessment of Septic Tank Nutrient Contributions

Planning for this study began in late 1989. A septic tank advisory committee was established consisting of person-

nel from the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation (DER) and district staff members. A contract was entered into by the district with HRS for the district's portion of the cost of the study.

The data collection has been ongoing since 1990. The first phase of the study was to identify potential areas of impact, identify sample locations, install monitoring equipment and commence sampling.

The first phase was data collection, analysis, report and recommendations. The study was completed during 1992.

The results of this study revealed there were no significant impacts along the Northeastern and Northern shoreline of the lake of nutrients entering the lake from the use of septic tanks.

- S-4 Diversion

This is a nutrient reduction plan for the reduction of phosphorus in the S-4 basin. The study recommended four alternatives which included BMPs, chemical treatment, detention and diversion.

The cost of the project included the construction of a levee around a portion of Lake Hicpochee.

Intensive work is continuing in the Caloosahatchee estuary to assess possible impacts of any diversions and to develop nutrient criteria for the estuary.

- Biogeochemical Behavior of Phosphorus in Soils

This research is being conducted by the University of Florida (IFAS) to study the biogeochemical behavior and transport of phosphorus in the Lake Okeechobee basin. The project is producing much information about phosphorus content in soils and wetlands



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sediments.

- **Rainfall-Runoff Model Development**

Rainfall-runoff models were developed to predict monthly runoff volumes that would enter Lake Okeechobee for various rainfall conditions that may occur. The models will allow prediction of runoff for several basins including: the lower Kissimmee River Basin, Fisheating Creek, St. Lucie Canal, Taylor Creek, Indian Prairie and the Caloosahatchee River basins. Future efforts include developing more physically based models.

- **Effectiveness of Lower Kissimmee Valley and Taylor Creek-Nubbin Slough Nutrient Load Reduction Measures**

This study is designed to include examination of phosphorus leaving the farms, phosphorus levels in tributaries, and phosphorus levels in major inputs to Lake Okeechobee. There is mounting evidence that the majority of BMPs have reduced phosphorus concentrations in dairy runoff. The district expects to see further evidence of decreased phosphorus concentrations in dairy runoff as the BMPs are completed.

There may be a 3-4 year lag in reaching the lowered phosphorus concentrations.

- **Evaluation of Management Techniques for Maintaining Marsh Nutrient Uptake Capability**

The Boney Marsh was a diked experimental marsh area on the Kissimmee River Pool B floodplain, in which water inflows and stages were controlled and monitored.

- **Development of Fertilization Practices for Beef Cattle Pastures to Minimize Nutrient Loss in Runoff**

The district funded an IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences) contract to prepare a report on research to

determine the effects of phosphorus fertilization on surface and ground water quality; to establish demonstration plots; evaluate effects of phosphorus application rates on forage yield and quality; and develop a fact sheet for farmer use.

- **The Relation of Variable Levels of Phosphorus Intake to Livestock Needs and Nutrition**

In yet another contract with IFAS, they conducted a field scale and metabolism study to evaluate reducing phosphorus in dairy runoff by decreasing the phosphorus content of dairy feed rations.

This study is complete and the results disseminated to the dairy industry.

- **Regulation Schedule Analysis**

## Lady of Mystery - Page 29

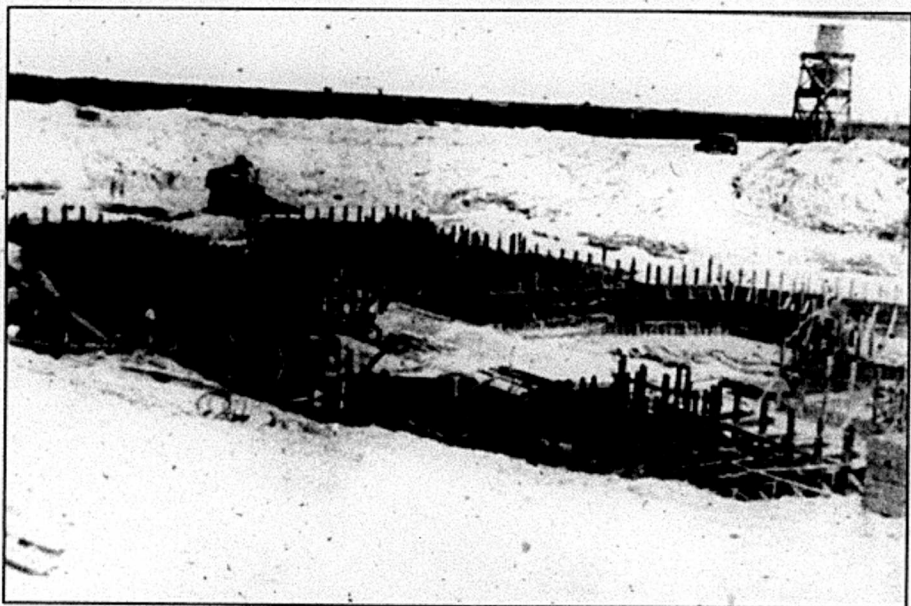
This study was undertaken in 1988 to determine which schedule would best meet the competing objectives of flood protection, protection and enhancement of the lake littoral zone, estuarine protection and water supply.

- **Lake Okeechobee Phosphorus Dynamics and Circulation Study**

This work was contracted with the University of Florida and its goals are to predict changes in lake phosphorus concentrations as affected by basin management actions and natural variability, and to understand key processes that affect phosphorus dynamics.

- **Lake Okeechobee Ecosystem Research**

This is a five-year contract with IFAS of the University of Florida to provide the district with sound scientific basis



The construction of the Herbert Hoover dike around the southern rim of the lake took many years. The scaffolding for one of the huge hurricane storm gates is put into place. Because of the construction during the worst years of the depression, the area around the lake was not hit as hard as was the rest of the nation.

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from which to make management decisions. The study focuses on patterns of vegetation in the littoral zone and their controlling factors, water chemistry, plankton community dynamics, larval and juvenile fish ecology and the distribution and ecology of wading birds.

All components of the research are designed to give the district a more complete understanding of the lake's ecology, and to examine the effects of nutrients and lake stage on the lake's biological community. The study is slated for completion in September 1993.

#### • Wading Bird Surveys - Lake Okeechobee

A major component of the lake ecosystem effect is the study of nesting and foraging ecology of wading birds in

relation to Lake Okeechobee environmental variables. Data analysis and a preparation of the draft report will be completed by district staff members during fiscal year 1992.

#### • Estuarine Studies - Caloosahatchee River

The primary objective of this project is to develop an environmentally sensitive estuarine management plan that defines a discharge strategy for S-79 and Lake Okeechobee while preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity of the Caloosahatchee estuary and to provide information for predicting estuarine health when considering a change in water management.

#### • St. Lucie Estuary - Environmental Studies

A contract is currently being developed to implement in the St. Lucie Estuary the generic estuarine nutrient study design model outlined in the Caloosahatchee Estuarine Nutrient Model description.

The contract will assess the current nutrient condition of the estuary and provide nutrient loading limits as targets for basin management.

#### • Assessment of Class I and III Water Quality Standards

The district is required to evaluate Class III standard violations and adverse impacts on environmental systems in the tributaries draining to the lake.

#### • Use of Biological Controls

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Locks such as these are a common site around the lake, and in most cases, the only way people have access into the main body of Lake Okeechobee.



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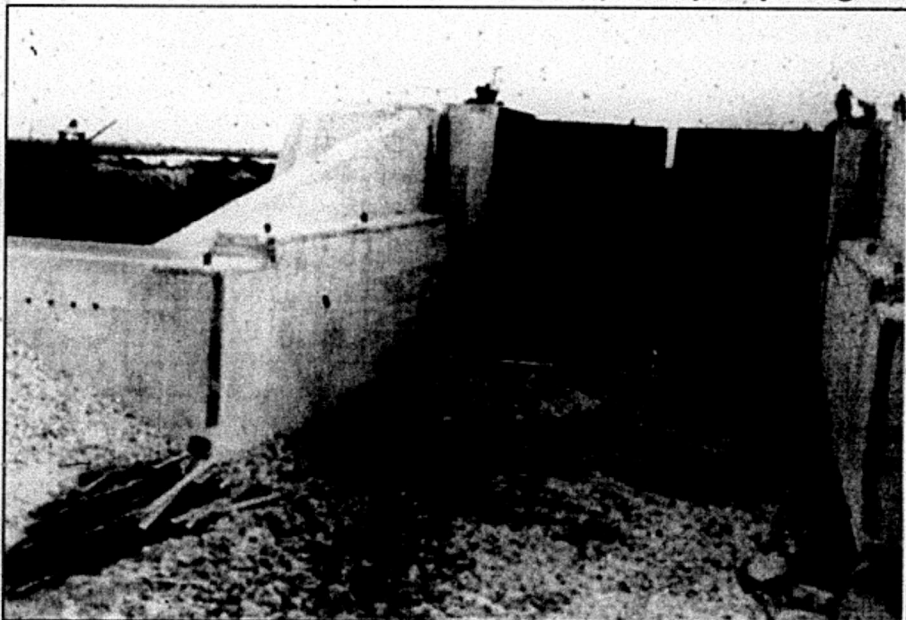


and the Florida Department of Natural Resources have funded the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to investigate the possible use of the water lettuce beetle and the hydrilla fly to control nuisance aquatic weeds within the lake. This is an ongoing project in the lake with annual progress reports.

The district is also funding to support USDA research in Australia to isolate and select a bio-control agent for controlling *Melaleuca* trees within its native range.

• Model Development and Applications

This model is the principal tool used in hydrologic evaluations by the district. It will be used to evaluate regional water supply alternatives, including regulation schedule alternatives for Lake Okeechobee, as part of the Lower East Coast Regional water Supply Plan.



The height of the construction on the levee was reached during 1934-35. Note the size of the truck and driver to gain perspective on the size of the huge hurricane gates.



One of the most common sites found on Lake Okeechobee on any clear day is this one where families and friends are wading a line in the littoral zone along the northwest shoreline of the lake. (Photo courtesy of Frank and Betty Williamson)



Although the Limpkin is known as the "shy one" this seldom sea bird came strolling along in May at lunchtime at a site on the Rim Canal near Belle Glade. (Photo by Twila Valentine)



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## Chapter 11

Now, we look at a scientist who is in direct opposition to most of the scientific data that is being used as the basis for the DER Dairy Rule, the Lake Okeechobee SWIM Plan, and the Everglades Agricultural Area SWIM Plan.

"The cause of nutrient overloading in Lake Okeechobee is the waters coming from the dairies to the north of the lake and from the Everglades Agricultural Area to the south of the lake."

This statement has been generally accepted by scientists, governmental agencies, and the public and has become the basis for most of the regulatory efforts now being implemented in the name of "cleaning up Lake Okeechobee."

But, there has been one voice of dissonance crying out in opposition to all the generally accepted evidence that was being used in 1992 as the basis for future actions on the lake.

Dr. Daniel E. Canfield, Jr., a scientist at the University of Florida's Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has insisted for more than eight years that nutrient overloads of phosphorus and nitrogen are not the cause of problems in the lake and that the lake is in no immediate danger.

Dr. Canfield and a university team conducted a five-year study of the lake. They sample water from more than 100 locations on the lake every two weeks. Back in the Gainesville laboratories, those samples are studied and analyzed for phosphorus, nitrogen, algae, zooplankton, and just about anything else that can be analyzed in the water samples.

In an abstract of a paper issued by Dr. Canfield and Mark Hoyer in 1988, the two concluded, "Reducing phosphorus inputs by 40 percent as proposed by the Lake Okeechobee Technical Advisory Commit-

tee (LOTAC) will not significantly improve water quality in Lake Okeechobee. Average total phosphorus concentrations will not decline significantly. Massive expenditures of public funds to reduce nutrient inputs will not protect long-term water quality at Lake Okeechobee."

Dr. Canfield, during a talk in Okeechobee in September, 1988, explained that Lake Okeechobee, in his opinion, has been a eutrophic lake, that is, a naturally productive lake, for several thousand years. He claims that the phosphorus concentrations in the lake at any given time are not related to what has come into it from the various tributaries. "There is no correlation between loading and phosphorus," he claimed. He cited as his most dramatic example the infamous August, 1986 algae bloom when, he claimed, the phosphorus levels in Lake Okeechobee were significantly lower than they had been for years.

Dr. Canfield said that lakes worldwide fall into three categories—OLIGOTROPHIC, MESOTROPHIC, and EUTROPHIC.

The oligotrophic lake is the pristine clear water lakes of the northern states with white sands. These are usually very deep lakes. Usually, the deeper the lake, the less the production. These are naturally unproductive systems. At the other end of the scale, a eutrophic lake is one that is naturally productive and the values they use to measure productivity are phosphorus, nitrogen, chlorophyll and transparency. Eutrophic lakes are usually very shallow, such as Lake Okeechobee. A mesotrophic lake is one that falls into the middle range between the two extremes.

Rather, Dr. Canfield claimed that the phosphorus levels in Lake Okeechobee are directly related to the depth of the

waters in the lake.

"They say the phosphorus concentrations are correlated with the average depth. If the lake goes deeper, phosphorus levels should go down. Just the opposite happened. The reason it happened was the decision to raise the water level, and they changed the surface area of the lake. They flooded over 50 square miles of land. When you flood previously dry land, the phosphorus comes out of the soil," Dr. Canfield said.

He said that it was the feedback from the marshes and not external loadings that causes the increases in phosphorus levels.

Dr. Canfield's paper claims that increases in phosphorus levels between 1973 and 1984 can be related to decisions to raise and lower the lake's levels. He said the raising of the lake in 1978 and 1979 which re-flooded 130 km of marshes and former croplands raised phosphorus. The drought in 1981 reduced the lake's surface levels by 1385 km and phosphorus readings went down. In 1983, when over 420 km were re-flooded, the readings once again went up.

"Total phosphorus concentrations increased after each major flooding event resulting in higher annual average total phosphorus concentrations than would be expected based on the annual phosphorus loads," Canfield's report states.

If Dr. Canfield's theory holds true, current phosphorus levels which are relatively low because of the drought, should soar to above average levels when the rains come and water levels in the lake re-flood areas which have now been dry for several months.

"They want a 40 percent reduction in phosphorus loading. They are working on



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a loading rate. They are working on the basis of a relationship between phosphorus input and water input. The first time it rains, all the theories go out the door. It will come with the watersheds," he said.

Dr. Canfield said that using a single water quality parameter to assess lake trophic state or changes in trophic state is dangerous. He cited the fact that nitrogen concentrations indicate that the lake is hypereutrophic but there is no indication of upward trends in nitrogen levels. In fact, they peaked in 1980 and have declined by 40 percent since then. He said total phosphorus and chlorophyll *a* levels suggest the lake is eutrophic. He said the upward trophic shift between 1973 and 1984 is suggested only by phosphorus concentrations. Average phosphorus concentrations have declined by 38 percent since 1984.

Dr. Canfield has claimed that the algae blooms are controlled by wind and not by phosphorus. He said that wind velocities of over 9-10 miles per hour stirs up sediments from the bottom of the lake and that is what encourages algae growth. In the past five years, the scientific community now concurs with Dr. Canfield's theories.

Protection of the fishery resource in Lake Okeechobee is often cited as one of the primary reasons for concerns about the eutrophication of the lake. No scientific basis exists for stating that Lake Okeechobee is in danger of imminent biological collapse, Dr. Canfield said.

He said that neither sport or commercial fishing has declined in quality, nor has there been a shift from sport fish to rough fish as would be expected if such a condition existed.

Don Fox, a fish biologist with the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, said in July 1991 that the fisheries in the lake are in very good condition. But, he warns that by the time a problem appears at this level, there are serious problems.

He said they need to keep a watch on the lower ends of the food chain, such as with the zooplankton, for they will exhibit the first signs of stress.

"The fisheries are in real good shape. We probably have the highest density of the crop we've ever had in the lake right now. Even to the point, the crappie are so thick, they are starting to stunt," Mr. Fox said. But, he added crappie are noted for stunting easily.

Mr. Fox said that they are not seeing a big explosion of shad (or rough fish) that he would think there would be due to the nutrient overloading of the lake.

Dr. Canfield's report claimed that time is available to determine if nutrient control programs are really needed in

## Lady of Mystery - Page 33 Lake Okeechobee.

He stated in the report that "...it is important to remember that most data sets have alternative interpretations and truly conclusive data sets are the culmination of years of diligent scientific effort. The interpretation of data is guided by the philosophy of the scientists and management agencies charged with the resolution of a problem."

Dr. Canfield's report issued one last warning: "Management decisions made in haste and based on weak scientific evidence can lead to the expenditure of huge amounts of public funds in the name of 'pollution control' with little resulting improvement in water quality or overall lake quality."



One of the more prominent residents of Lake Okeechobee is the alligator. In the summer of 1996, the one endangered species had 167 nests along the northwest shoreline of the lake in the littoral zone and in the Audubon sanctuary. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District)

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## Chapter 12

Commercial fishing is the oldest economic activity near Lake Okeechobee.

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During the 1920's, sports fishermen discovered the lake, and they began to lobby for legislation to halt the commercial fishing on the lake.

For years, even to this day, sports fishermen insist that commercial fishermen are detrimental to the gamefish populations. The controversy has raged for nearly 90 years.

Our lady with the shimmering skirts, Lake Okeechobee, serves many functions in Central and South Florida. She's a source of water supply for both urban, rural and agricultural needs, and flood control. The lake has a great economic value in its use for both commercial and recreational fishing.

Anglers travel from all over the United States to fish for the largemouth bass, the black crappie, bluegill and bream. Commercial fishermen harvest several species of catfish, redear sunfish, bluegill, striped mullet and rough fish such as shad and gar.

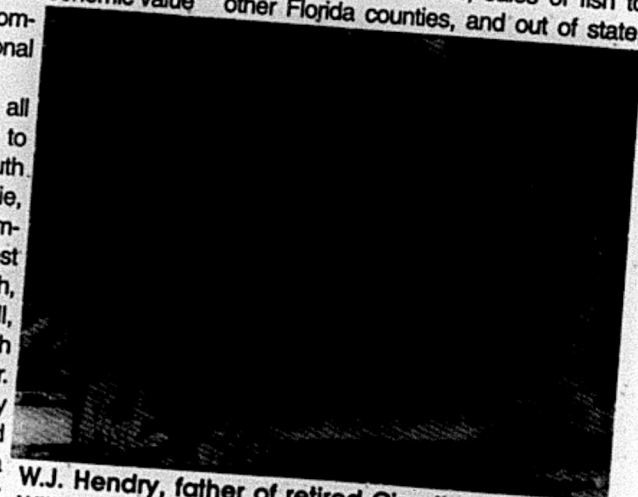
An economic study completed in 1986 placed the value of the lake as a resource with its fishery stock and recreational and commercial fishing incomes at nearly \$100

million. The study was conducted by Dr. Frederick Bell at Florida State University under a joint contract with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (GFC) and the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation (DER).

Commercial fishermen harvested over 4.9 million pounds of fish during the 1985-86 study period. That catch consisted of an estimated 69.6 percent catfish, 18.1 percent bream, 8.1 percent shad and gar, and 4.2 percent striped mullet. Don Fox, a fishery biologist with the GFC regional office in Okeechobee, said the commercial and recreational harvest is an excellent way to remove several tons of excess nutrients from the lake annually. In the 1984-85 year, scientists estimate that between commercial and sports fishing, 75 tons of nitrogen and 23 tons of phosphorus were removed from the lake.

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W.J. Hendry, father of retired Circuit Court Judge William Hendry, shows a Miami Herald reporter the operation with dressed catfish at his Osceola Fisheries around 1950. The operation was located on Taylor Creek.



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Recreational anglers continue to protest the harvest by the commercial fishermen, but others say the recreational fishing is not harmed by the harvests by commercial operations. Trotlines account for 58.2 percent of the commercial harvest, while haul seines account for 36.6 percent and wire traps, 5.2 percent. Mr. Fox said that for several years only 10 haul seine permits have been issued annually to commercial fishermen in the Clewiston area. There are approximately 80 trotliners and those who use the wire traps.

Fox said during an August 1989 interview, and repeated in February, 1992, that the fisheries in the lake, in spite of the drought, are in very good condition.

"The impacts we are seeing at the lower levels is the water quality. The invertebrate community is pretty good. Generally, when you're looking for a problem in the system, you look at the water quality.

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The effect of the recreational fishing industry economically is even more dramatic for the economic health of the five lake counties. Considering both the direct and indirect spending that results from tourist anglers, Mr. Bell's report estimates

that \$22.1 million annually flows into those five counties. Excluding boats and motors, Bell estimates that the tourist angler spends an average of \$65.51 per fishing day.

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Airboat associations abound around Lake Okeechobee and while many use their crafts for recreation, they also work with groups and agencies to provide rides for school children and youngsters participating in summer water camps. (Photo courtesy of Frank and Betty Williamson)



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## Chapter 12

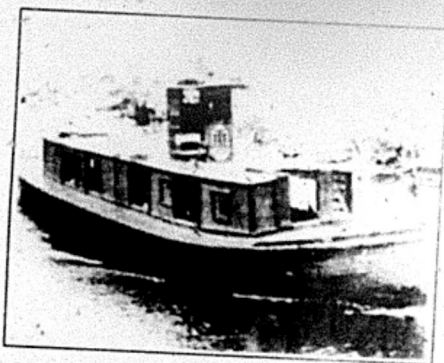
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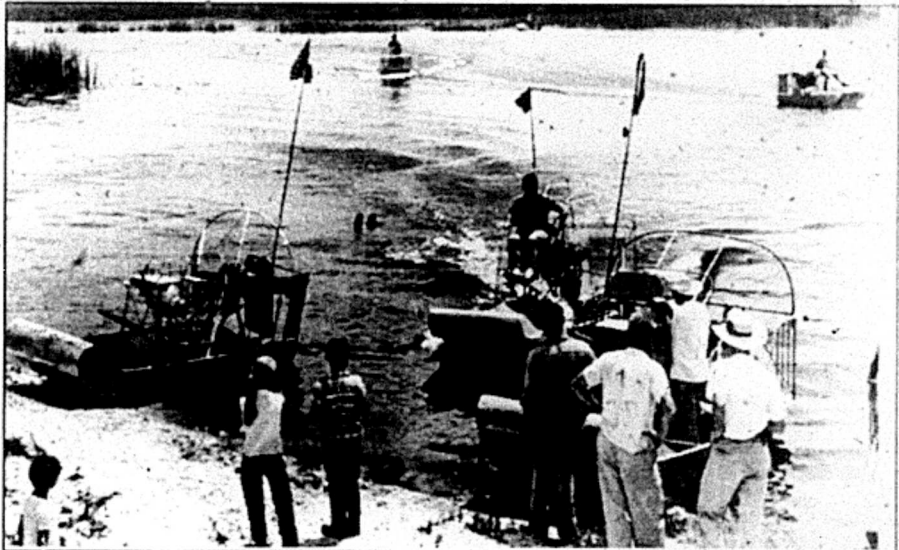
## Lady of Mystery - Page 35

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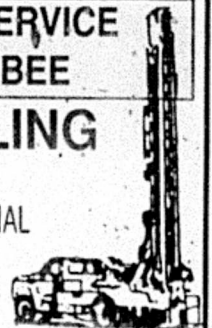
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## Chapter 13

Since Lake Okeechobee "Lady of Mystery" was first published in March 1992, many changes have occurred in respect to the lake. The Lake Okeechobee SWIM Plan, implemented in 1992, is currently undergoing its final draft of the 1997 update and will be published in August 1997.

The lawsuit filed by former U.S. Attorney Dexter Lehtinen was settled and ultimately resulted in the adoption in 1994 of the Everglades Forever Act.

The long-awaited five-year study of our Lady of Mystery was completed and published in 1995, with some interesting new facts about our lady.

The monitoring of the Best Management Practices reveal they are working, but the lake is still receiving about 100 tons of phosphorus per year over the target loading of 397 tons.

Work on the restoration of the Kissimmee River is slated to begin in 1999.

The next few chapters will be devoted to bringing the story of our lady with the shimmering skirts, Lake Okeechobee, and her watery connections up to date through July 1997.

While many significant occurrences have been recorded in the past five years, probably the completion and publication of "Advances in Limnology," the Ecological studies on the littoral and pelagic systems of Lake Okeechobee in late 1995 were among the most significant.

A seminar, in April 1996, led by Dr. Nick Aumen, then the head of the Okeechobee Systems Research for the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee for the South Florida Water Management District, and co-author of the book, monitored a discussion of the study and

looked at the results from the natural history standpoint.

The members of the panel who participated in the seminar were: Dr. Aumen; Doug Rosen, Lake Okeechobee SWIM Plan coordinator for SFWMD; Ron Miedema, biologist in charge of plant control on Lake Okeechobee with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Gary Warren, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission; Abdullah Arrami, Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Mark Baker, SFWMD; and, Al Goldstein, SFWMD.

Dr. Aumen described the 730-square-mile lake as the "liquid heart of South Florida," and noted there were some scientists and staff members from state and federal agencies who argued whether the lake is a natural lake in the 1990s or a managed reservoir. How to manage it remains an ongoing dilemma since the heavily-populated southeast coast relies on the lake as its backup water supply. Agricultural interests around the lake and south of the lake rely on the lake for their water needs, and are concerned that low levels could jeopardize vegetables, sugar cane, citrus, beef production and dairy operations.

Environmentalists would like to see the water quality and quantity returned to historic levels when it flowed primarily into the Everglades, and not through canal systems into the Atlantic Ocean.

For the past 15 years, emphasis has been placed on the reduction of nutrients flowing into the lake, primarily attributed to agricultural operations north of the lake. While some efforts by agribusinessmen, called Best Management Practices (BMPs) have somewhat reduced the amounts of nutrients, phos-

phorus and nitrogen are the leading offenders, the past 10 years have been spent in enacting legislation and implementing programs to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering Lake Okeechobee to 397 tons per year.

Several civilian and scientific committees have been formed through the years to study the problem and arrive at suggestions for solutions.

Since 1989, the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan has served as the road map for all aspects of the lake and what needs to be implemented to preserve its environmental values.

With the remaining 30 dairies in the watershed, 19 have gone out of business, some of the practices which have been installed to reduce phosphorus include lagoons and settling ponds to take up the phosphorus in the water from barn runoffs. Some of these ponds then utilize the water for spray irrigation in fields of forage crops that are then fed back to the cattle.

Dairy livestock have been confined in specially built barns where the waste materials have been held and directed to specific ponds and lagoons for cleaning. Other livestock have been moved away from canals, streams and lakes to keep the waste from entering the waterways.

There has been a reduction of phosphorus in fertilizer on improved pasture areas and also in the feed given to the cattle. Research continues in the reduction of phosphorus in these areas.

Some five years ago, the water management district entered into a contract with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to do a five year study of the second largest



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freshwater lake in the United States with the ultimate goal of seeing how the lake responds to phosphorus and a reduction in their flows and how this nutrient is cycled through the lake system.

The results of the five-year intensive study have given scientists new knowledge of how lake levels affect the health of the lake; the effect of nutrient loads such as phosphorus and nitrogen on water quality, and what role aquatic vegetation plays in the lake's ecosystem and the changes and habits of the habitat for the lake's wading bird populations.

One of the most important discoveries is that changes in the lake levels seriously affect much of the lake's life. Higher lake levels cause declines in wading bird populations; declines in submerged aquatic vegetation, a decrease in the diversity of small animals and decreased numbers of game fish in native vegetation.

Another surprise for the scientific community was the discovery the lake's waters contain five separate, distinct ecological zones, and each one evidences a different response to nutrients, light and other factors.

Dr. Aumen said the study confirmed that each of the five zones responds in a different manner to changes in management activities by man. For example, a management tool implemented to help in the north zone of the lake near Okeechobee might not be the proper tool to benefit the edge zone of the lake near Belle Glade and South Bay in the Southern portion of the lake. The center zone and the transition zone of the lake all respond in a different manner from the north zone and edge zone when it comes to changes in nutrient levels, light and other factors, including winds and wave action.

The littoral, or marsh, zone of the lake

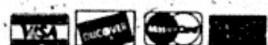
is large, but less than half the size it once was before the Herbert Hoover Dike was constructed around the lake. It is in this zone that the largest percentage of all plants in the lake are located.

However, many of the plants which

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inhabited the littoral zone have been crowded out by exotic plants such as the cattails, some as high as 15 feet tall, Brazilian pepper (also called Florida holly) and the Melaleuca trees. Most of these exotic plants that chase out the



By the 1990s, imported cane cutters were little more than a memory and mechanical harvesting of sugar cane became the normal method south of Lake Okeechobee. (Photo courtesy of the Belle Glade Sun.)



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native plants are not very good habitat for the animals, Dr. Aumen said and this is certainly the case with the cattails.

He told of how the Melaleuca was imported from Australia in the early part of the century, because it was good to take up water and it would dry a place out. What they didn't know at the time, Dr. Aumen said, was the Melaleuca crowds out and out-competes just about every thing else. He noted that some stands of the Melaleuca around Moore Haven in Glades County and along the levee between Lakeport and Moore Haven, the stands of Melaleuca are so thick, a person cannot walk between the trees.

In discussing the problem that the scientists face with the fact that implementing one project may have an adverse environmental reaction on another involves the Melaleuca, Dr. Aumen said.

The district and other agencies have a problem on how to manage the precious resource that is Lake Okeechobee in view of competing objectives, Dr. Aumen stated. He said the lake levels are just one area where this occurs. A lower lake level might be of benefit to the marsh area and help produce a healthier and more diverse population of plants and animals. That might be very good.

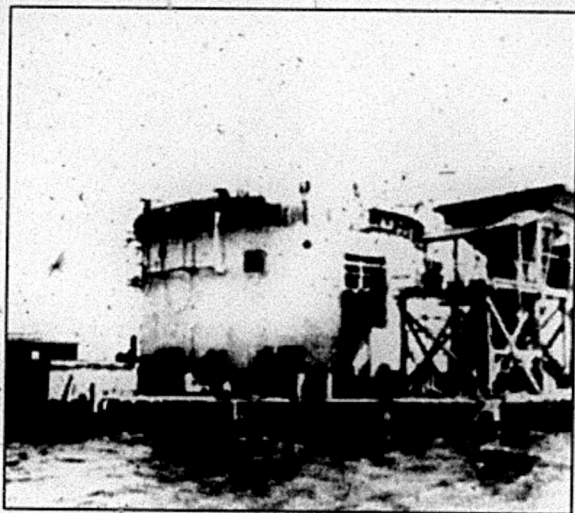
At the same time, he said the district must keep in mind that a lower lake level means less water in storage and less water

available for the 5,000 new residents moving into Florida every week. Florida's growth rate is one of the highest in the world right now, he said.

There are often even competing environmental objectives and he used the example of the Melaleuca. When the state had the drought in the 1980s and the lake level dropped to about 10 feet, it dried out large areas of the marsh zone. During that time a lot of Melaleuca seeds germinated and became established in the marsh. He stated that one of the things the scientists are worried about is that if they lower the lake levels, which may be of great benefit to wading birds and other plants, it may favor the expansion of the Melaleuca plants.

The study also revealed to the scientific community that the lake has her share of troubles, most of which are readily reversible, but the lake is no where near the ecological collapse that has been predicted by many in the environmental community.

Since that report was released, other studies on the lake are continuing. Water monitoring stations are dotted about the lake and in December 1996 a committee made up of scientists from all over the United States, after months of study presented their findings on how the best management practices are affecting the phosphorus loadings to Lake Okeechobee.



The Clewiston water tower was under construction when this photograph was taken of it. The tower sits in Lake Okeechobee close to the shipping channel.



This is a recent photograph of the United States Sugar Corporation processing plant located near Clewiston, known as the "sweetest town in America."

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## Chapter 14

The review panel on phosphorus control in the Lake Okeechobee basin was constituted during the summer of 1995 by the South Florida Water Management District and they were given the general charge of considering current and planned phosphorus management in the basin and to make recommendations on future management strategies.

Specifically, the panel was to address four questions:

1) Are ongoing strategies in the watershed sufficient to reduce phosphorus loading to the SWIM Act target, and, if so, in what time frame?

2) Would better compliance with existing rules be sufficient to meet the target?

3) What additional proposed strategies are likely to be most effective for further reducing phosphorus loads? and

4) What other strategies would the panel recommend for consideration?

While addressing the latter question, the panel was to consider strategies such as additional regulation or enforcement, best management practices (BMPs), alternative treatment techniques, innovative phosphorus control practices from non-agricultural sources, and land use changes. It also was to comment on the cost-effectiveness of phosphorus control options.

The panel consisted of seven individuals from academia and a regulatory agency outside the state of Florida. These individuals were, in addition to Dr. Armstrong who is in the Department of Civil Engineering; Dr. G. Dennis Cooke, Department of Biological Sciences, Kent State University; Dr.

Larry F. Huggins, Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Purdue Engineering; Dr. Frank J. Humenick, Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department, North Carolina State University; Dr. Leonard A. Shabman, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech; Dr. Robert C. Ward, Chemical and Bioresource Engineering Department, Colorado State University; and Richard E. Wedepohl, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The panel reviewed a substantial number of reports and articles furnished by the district. While in Florida, the panel toured four farms in the Lake Okeechobee drainage basin north of the lake on the first day. These farms represented four types of dairy and beef cattle operations in the basin, namely a dairy heifer farm which had been converted to a beef cattle operation, one that had always been a beef cattle operation, a combined confinement and pasture dairy farm, and a total confinement dairy farm.

Technical presentations covering a wide range of issues were made to the panel by district and Florida Department of Environmental Protection personnel. Through extended discussions while in Florida and following that meeting, the panel crafted its final report, and its finding and recommendations were then presented to the governing board of the water management district.

As the panel toured the various farms, heard testimony, and deliberated, there was constant attention to developing answers to the four questions posed by the district. Through

those deliberations, the panel has put together the following responses organized by the four questions.

Question 1: Are ongoing strategies in the watershed sufficient to reduce phosphorus loading to the SWIM Act target, and, if so in what time frame?

The panel concluded that the ongoing phosphorus control strategies are working, that phosphorus concentrations are decreasing in tributaries to Lake Okeechobee, and that activities to lower phosphorus loads to the lake should continue. Because the trend in phosphorus loadings is clearly downward, they did not believe that major new initiatives, such as requirements to install expensive new BMPs at the dairies, or at cattle operations or heifer farms, are justifiable at this time, and this is consistent with the Rural Clean Water Program findings for Nubbin Slough.

The panel concluded that remedial actions taken within the Northern watersheds during the past few years have represented a reasonable balance between conflicting public goals. A key unknown to predicting future load reductions is the limited understanding of the groundwater contributions to the system. While a new model provides some valuable insights and its continued use will help identify potential future loadings, groundwater loading predictions will remain uncertain at best.

Addressing the issue of how long it will take before target loadings are reached, if ongoing strategies are continued, is much more problematic. While loadings may continue to decline from installation of past BMPs, load

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reductions to the lake may begin to plateau, perhaps at a higher level than that desired, and it is not unrealistic to predict that reductions from the strategies already being implemented could take a decade or more to be fully realized.

"The panel recommends that the district fine tune its BMP implementation practices, focus on the less expensive BMPs for beef cattle, dairy, and heifer operations, continuous modeling studies that will address the question of strategy sufficiency, and those studies that will help determine the response of the lake to external and internal loads, and maintain an atmosphere of creativity in which the regulated community can bring its ideas and suggestions for solutions to the process," Dr. Armstrong said.

Question 2: Would better compliance with existing rules be sufficient to meet the target?

Based on information presented and its understanding of rule compliance, the panel concluded that farmers and others in the Lake Okeechobee watershed are in compliance with the Dairy Rule and Works of the District rules as now enforced.

There remains confusion about whether compliance refers to performance-based or technology-based standards on dairy farms. Better compliance with existing rules resulting in phosphorus load reduction would increase the probability of the SWIM target being met.

More aggressive enforcement of these rules could provide some additional reductions, but the panel concluded the expansion is not in the best interests of all concerned. Maintaining the working relationships already established with the landowners is

essential to achieving continued cooperation and load reductions as is involving them in the development of new rules.

The panel recommended that compliance should be performance-based on load and not concentration.

The panel also believed that there has been too little time to judge the long-term effectiveness of PCPs that have recently been put into place to achieve SWIM load targets. Therefore, they recommended that only low cost and modest operational changes to PCPs at dairies be required when seeking to assure compliance with existing rules.

Question 3: What additional proposed strategies, recommended by district staff, are likely to be most effective for further reducing phosphorus loads?

The panel concluded that four of the 10 phosphorus and nitrogen control strategies considered by district staff should receive high priority for implementation: develop BMPs for cattle; remediate hot spots; reduce or eliminate backpumping to the lake; and, create incentives for reduction of phosphorus imports to the watershed.

Two of the 10 strategies should receive second priority, and they are: Improved management of or creation of wetlands; and, augment biological treatment of animal waste programs.

Utilizing chemical and biochemical treatment of animal waste programs, and evaluating in-lake measures to reduce phosphorus were considered to be third priority. An exception to this third priority ranking was water level management which is considered an in-lake measure.

No priority was assigned to the removal of contaminated sediments in

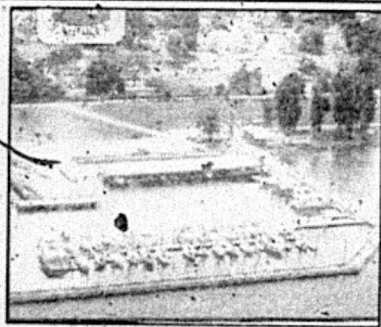
tributaries because this strategy should be evaluated further. The strategy to implement aquifer storage and retrieval deep-well injection should be eliminated from further consideration because, in the opinion of the panel, its benefits are far outweighed by the potential negative impacts.

The panel recommended that the strategies identified by the district staff be considered for implementation in the priority order given. It also recommended that strong consideration be given to the costs each strategy could impose on those regulated and the phosphorus and nitrogen load reductions actually achieved by their implementation. The point of diminished benefits in terms of in-lake phosphorus concentration reduction, for costs incurred for phosphorus and nitrogen reduction via more and more expensive BMPs needs to be carefully evaluated with the models and other tools already developed by the district relating land use and BMPs in place to off-site phosphorus loads and the impact of those loads reductions on the decrease of phosphorus concentrations in the lake.

Question 4: What other strategies would the panel recommend for consideration?

The panel suggested a transition from the concentration-based approach of the Works of the District, to a Waste Load Allocation (WLA) basis and recommended that the district give strong consideration to such an approach. The WOD approach already contains elements of the WLA basis so the transition should not be difficult.

The panel believed the WLA approach would provide a more equitable and fairer approach to regulation



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of dischargers, for the approach has been used for years by state regulatory agencies and supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for point source discharges.

The panel realized that phosphorus control in the Lake Okeechobee watershed is focused mainly on non-point sources and that WLA has been generally applied to such sources in the United States. The opportunity exists for the district to move from its innovative approach for non-point source regulation based on concentration to another innovative approach based on waste loads.

The district can consider nutrient loads from all sources in the drainage basin and those internal to the lake. To make this transition will require an institutional shift as well as a technical shift.

These steps include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) an updating of phosphorus source inventory in the basin and lake; 2) further investigation of in-lake phosphorus processes to expand the focus of recently completed investigations, to permit better assessment of impacts from activities such as lake level changes, and to enhance the district's ability to deter-

**Lady of Mystery - Page 41**  
mine lake recovery time; 3) development of ways to estimate off-site phosphorus loads through monitoring of phosphorus concentration and flow and modeling efforts that generate load estimates without requiring flow estimates; 4) development of a water quality information system consisting of monitoring, including citizen monitoring, data analysis and synthesis, and information transfer and insuring coordination between monitoring needed for compliance as well as model support; and 5) development of institutional rules needed to implement a WLA management system.



During the 1970s, large numbers of cane cutters were imported from the off-shore islands to assist with the annual cane harvest in the Glades. (Photo courtesy the Belle Glade Sun.)

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## Chapter 15

A special panel was assembled in the latter part of 1995 to study the steps which had been taken to reduce phosphorus loadings into Lake Okeechobee and what further reductions are needed to bring the loadings down to the mandated 397 ton level. This chapter continues the report which the panel delivered to the governing board of the South Florida Water Management District on Dec. 13, 1995.

### Update Phosphorus Sources in The Lake Okeechobee Basin

The panel detailed the steps involved in waste load management. They included: 1) Determine the allowable nutrient loads to the water body. For Lake Okeechobee it would be the target load, which is already established at the 397 tons; 2) Allocate controllable load to point and non-point discharges. Rainfall and non-controllable sources would be as it is done now and then allocate the rest; 3) Determine loads allocations for dischargers through monitoring and modeling estimates; 4) Monitor for regulatory purposes as is done now, but for flow and concentration; and, 5) enforce load limits in a similar way as is done now for concentration.

The panel concluded that good estimates of phosphorus and nitrogen sources external and internal to Lake Okeechobee are needed to implement the Waste Load Allocation (WLA) basis for phosphorus and nitrogen control. While external loads of both nutrients are reasonably well known at the boundary of the lake, there is a lack of knowledge of specific nutrient sources within the drainage basin in general with the possible exception of the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough basin. The panel further concluded that enough is known about external

sources of nutrient loads to guide the district in its regulatory activities in the drainage basin, but there is a serious deficiency regarding nutrient loads generated within the lake which have overshadowed and may continue to overshadow the impacts of the external loads.

The panel recommended that the most recent hydrologic and nutrient budgets (James, Jones and Smith 1995, Flaig and Havens 1995) be continually refined as new information develops and that the

nutrient budgets reflect loads from the drainage basins as well as from rainfall, groundwater, and the internal loads.

The panel further recommended that the information conveyed by these budgets be used to guide regulatory activities in the individual drainage basins, that continued attention be given to nutrient control in the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough basin but that attention also be given to the Kissimmee River basin, the EAA, and the Indian Prairie/Hamey Pond basin.

The panel recommended that immediate and significant attention be given to internal sources of nutrients, particularly from the littoral zone and sediments.

### In-Lake Processes Investigations

The panel concluded that an understanding of in-lake processes which relate to internal phosphorus and nitrogen sources and cycling of phosphorus and nitrogen within the lake is essential to continued management of the lake. The insignificant response of Lake Okeechobee, in terms of lower phosphorus concentration, is due to the continued external loading and in-lake processes. There are well-founded reasons to conclude that an ideal environment for internal loading exists in the lake, including groundwater contributions and the possibility of ephemeral thermal stratification, coupled with high chemical and biological oxygen demand, which together will promote extensive release of phosphorus from phosphorus-rich sediments.

The probability of temporary thermal stratification (hours) increases with water level, and the panel concluded that increases in lake stage appear to be correlated with increased water column phosphorus. The predicted change in lake phosphorus concentrations when the tar-



This striking photo of the Great Blue Heron perfectly reflected in the waters of Lake Okeechobee makes tours of the lake a most enjoyable experience. (Photo courtesy of the South Florida Water Management District)

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get external load is achieved may not produce a detectable response in terms of whole lake average chlorophyll. The district has completed a number of studies recently which characterize phosphorus behavior in the lake, and these studies need to be integrated with the historical knowledge of the lake to provide a basis for understanding the historical, current, and future response of Lake Okeechobee to phosphorus and nitrogen loading. The district does need to consider other studies which lead to an understanding of the littoral zone, how phosphorus and nitrogen sources are generated in this zone, and how these sources relate to water stage. Further, the district needs to continue to develop and use models like WASP to simulate water quality changes under historical, current and future nutrient loadings, and to use the results of such studies to support management decisions.

The panel recommended additional emphasis on quantifying the rate of internal loading and on determining sources and mechanisms of phosphorus release. If small areas are responsible for major phosphorus internal loading (e.g. former agricultural areas that become flooded), focused management options such as isolation of these regions, nutrient inactivation, or reduced inundations through management of lower water levels could be effective.

In the panel's view, the district will benefit considerably from its water quality modeling efforts, and results from modeling efforts, along with concurrent review of recently completed work, will add significant insight into the lake's internal processes. This effort would result in much better prediction of how the lake would respond to both external loading changes and in-lake management actions, such as water level management changes.

#### Develop Ways To Estimate Off-Site Phosphorus Loads Through Monitoring

The panel concluded that monitoring of flows and concentrations at representative sites is necessary to estimate offsite loads of nitrogen and phosphorus accurately, to evaluate the effectiveness of BMPs and other nutrient control devices in place, and to provide necessary calibration and confirmation data for the various models being developed for estimating loads from beef cattle operations, dairy and heifer farms, and other land uses generating high nutrient loads.

The panel recommended that flows and concentrations be monitored at selected sites in the Lake Okeechobee drainage basin to estimate off-site loads of phosphorus and nitrogen from beef cattle and dairy and heifer farm operations so that the effectiveness of BMPs may be

#### Lady of Mystery - Page 43

assessed, to provide necessary calibration and confirmation data for the various models being developed for estimating loads from such operations.

#### Develop Ways To Estimate Off-Site Phosphorus Loads Through Modeling

The panel concludes that the district, through the University of Florida, has developed excellent models, CREAMS-WT, LOADSS, and FHANTM.. to simulate surface/subsurface runoff, estimate loads from drainage basins, evaluate the effectiveness of BMPs, and calculate retention of phosphorus in wetlands and channels.

The panel recommends that these models continue to be refined to the point that they may be used in a WLA context to estimate phosphorus and nitrogen loads from individual parcels of land with and without various BMPs in place.



Scenes of the devastation following the 1928 hurricane remain a grim reminder in the archives of area newspapers and even the South Florida Water Management District, to make us all recall the power of a hurricane. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District.)

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### Development of Water Quality Information System

The district has succeeded in developing both types of monitoring - the "what" (regular sampling at fixed sites in a manner that is consistent over time) and the "why" monitoring (short term monitoring efforts designed to gain a better understanding of the processes and pathways that affect the quality of water). However, given the unresolved questions about existing BMPs meeting targets, it is suggested that further refinement in both types of monitoring is warranted.

The panel recommended a review

and refinement of the current monitoring efforts related to the Lake Okeechobee phosphorus management effort to insure that the monitoring resources are being used to obtain the data and information needed to answer the board's questions about the status and trends in the watershed.

### Institutional And Economic Structures Needed To Implement WLA

The panel concluded that implementation of the WLA approach would require a shift in the regulatory structure within the district and a change in the rules used for regulation. Remaining innova-

tive as it has been in the past will enable the district to implement variations on the tradition WLA approach so that it could apply to non-point sources in the Lake Okeechobee drainage basins.

The panel recommended that over time the district consider designing and adopting a transferable permit system for WLA. The design should be preceded by development of the necessary technical criteria and monitoring protocols, by public education about the merits of such a system and by public comment on the specific design features of such a system.



The Custard Apple Inn located at Canal Point was a frequent stopping point for the mail boats in the early 1900s. The boat traveled from West Palm Beach to Moore Haven and carried freight, mail passengers and goods for the few settlers who were living around the shoreline of Lake Okeechobee.



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## Chapter 16

Several suggestions were made by the panel as a result of the study. One of the primary recommendations was further study and analysis of the in-lake phosphorus and the cycling of that source through the water column.

Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough, Kissimmee River Basin, the Everglades Agricultural Area, and the Indian Prairie/Harney Pond Basin are currently the largest contributors of controlled sources of phosphorus and should receive continued attention regarding nutrient control.

There are well-founded reasons to conclude that an ideal environment for internal loading exists in the lake, the panel concluded. The panel said there should be a concentrated effort on the rate of internal loading.

Then-Governing Board Member Nathaniel Reed noted the panel was made up of predominantly agricultural engineering experts but he was still somewhat surprised at their recommendation to focus on the less expensive BMPs primarily because of the "shaky" financial situation of the upstream dairies.

Mr. Reed said he thinks it is worth pursuing to get the regulatory power over the dairies removed from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and to the water management district. He said the panel has given the district good advice and it should go to one agency, with review by the senior partner, which would be FDEP.

The panel recommended the work on Lake Okeechobee should be done in a phased approach. The first phase should be done, as has been done in

the watershed, then wait to see what affect that will have. Then, implement the second phase.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been used for several years by local farmers and ranchers in an effort to reduce phosphorus in the water coming off those farms and ranches.

While the phosphorus content has been reduced, a recent draft copy of a special report from the South Florida Water Management District reveals that the annual phosphorus loading to Lake Okeechobee has leveled off at about 100 tons over the 397-ton target mandated by the Florida Legislature.

The 1989 Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan charged the water management dis-

trict with the original mandate to reduce phosphorus. The plan is currently under its second updating and should be released in late summer 1997.

The Works of the District (WOD) permitting program and the DEP Dairy Rule were also designed and implemented to reduce the amount of phosphorus coming off farms and ranches.

The panel recommended fine-tuning the BMPs for not only dairy cattle, but for beef cattle and heifer operations, as well. They also encouraged the water management district to "maintain an atmosphere of creativity in which the regulated community can bring its ideas and suggestions for solutions into the process."

During a recent interview with Frank



Today, Lake Okeechobee provides water recreation for all types of outdoor activities, including sailboats. (Photo courtesy Frank and Betty Williamson)

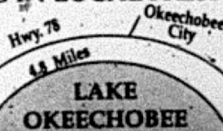


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(Sonny) Williamson, a local agribusinessman and chairman of the governing board of the water management district, he spoke of those "hot spots" and of some of the new methods and suggestions that are being considered to decrease phosphorus. Many of the newer innovations have come from south of the lake where farmers are working to decrease phosphorus in runoff from the sugar cane.

Mr. Williamson said, "You know ranchers and all of us have had a tendency in the past to flush out the ditches. Pull all of the boards out when it was raining hard and just let the water go. Any time you increase the velocity in those ditches, you move a bunch of stuff downstream. It's best to leave all that and clean out your ditches occasionally and put all that back on the land. So that's one thing: slow the velocity down in the exit ditches and there's many ways to do that which are pretty cheap.

"There is some more work being done on taking ditches that go through overflow areas that have been ditched. One of the things we have done in Florida is to take all these ponds and connect the dots with ditches and a lot of those ditches go through little slough areas. They are saying that in a lot of cases you can go back and fill in those ditches partially and let it be a swale and in fact, put in some retention areas to prevent the water from getting into those swale areas rapidly. Hay crop those places. Don't hold the water so much that it becomes a wetland again, but hold the water long enough that you get a bunch of nutrients going back into a grass crop or something that you will then cut and use that as a way to recycle phosphorus onto the uplands," he said.

The draft report mentions that several strategies are being suggested that may help reduce the phos-

phorus loading and where the costs won't be too expensive for the landowner. Some of those strategies include bringing the four key over-target basins down to the loading target and to continue the overall watershed efforts to reduce loading.

The four basins referred to in the draft report and the overage from each of those are: Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough with a target load of 26.7 tons of phosphorus is 63.7 tons over target; the S-154 basin, south of the last flood control structure to where the Kissimmee River enters the lake has a target of 4.8 tons a year and is currently 14.2 tons over target; the Loftin Road structure known as S-65-D has a target load of 6.8 tons annually and is discharging 22.3 tons over target; and, the State Road 70 control structure known as S-65-E has an annual load targeted at 21.4 tons and is discharging just about double over that target figure at 21.5 tons.

The target loading rate is a function of how much water enters the lake and how long the water resides in the lake.

Observations from several years of water quality monitoring indicate that during periods of heavy rainfall, the difference is greatest between the target and actual phosphorus loading. In the dry season, according to the report, approximately 25 tons of phosphorus enters the lake a month. That amount more than triples in the wet season. During 1995, the extraordinary amount of rainfall in August, September and October caused a tremendous increase in loading compared to the average.

In the coming months, the district will be concentrating on



Boats were tossed about like matchsticks in the Belle Glade area with the 1928 hurricane.



This home was uninhabitable following the 1928 hurricane that hit Belle Glade.

  
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the four basins who are still discharging above the target loading. There will be a detailed analysis of the currently available data and from that data an implementation plan for corrective measures will be developed. A multi-agency team will be working to improve the water quality and the district will re-direct internal resources to this approach.



The draft states that it is essential that the landowner be involved from the beginning of the process to seek solutions. Two areas will be further explored that being on-site retention and off-side collection treatment.

Some of the on-site ideas include: BMPs; farm-scale multi-crop harvest-

The railroad bed which ran with vegetative between Clewiston and Lake Harlow gave away under the heavy flow of rainfall during the 1926 hurricane.

ward during the development of solutions.

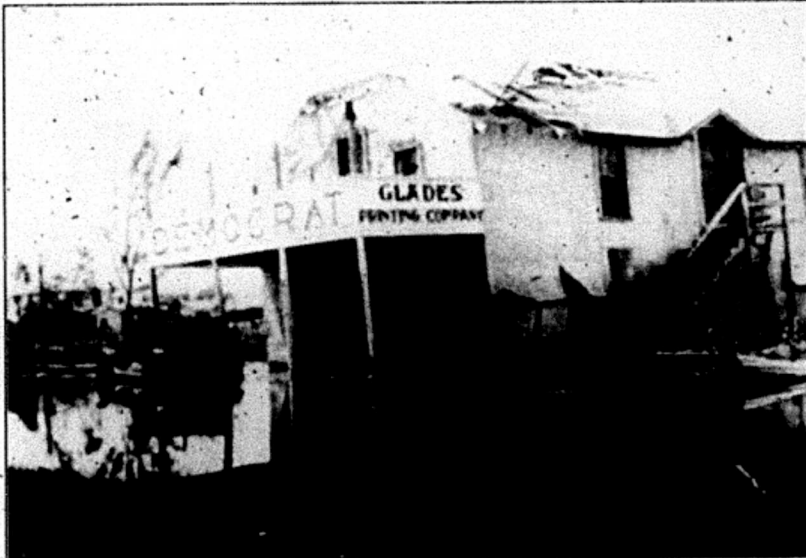
Off-site treatment will examine collective solutions such as adjacent parcels in sub-basins, and/or basin-scale utilization of existing wetlands, and/or the creation of new wetlands as filter marshes, riparian easements and chemical treatment.

Once alternatives have been developed, including engineering and site location, they will need to be implemented as rapidly as possible, and monitored for effectiveness. Landowner involvement and district participation in the process will be essential.

In the regulatory program, users of the Works of the District are required to meet specific off-site discharge phosphorus concentration limits. If the data indicates the off-site discharge concentration will not be met, the landowner is required to take corrective measures to bring discharges from the property into compliance.

A routine biweekly water quality monitoring program is conducted on permitted parcels. One year of monitoring is required on all individual permits to document compliance status.

A non-routine, specific-need surveillance monitoring program is also conducted throughout the basin to seek out unpermitted land uses and non-complying discharges. Those parcels requiring corrective action have been identified.



The offices of the Glades County Democrat was destroyed by the Sept. 18, 1926 hurricane when it hit the community of Moore Haven.



The city of Miami and Coral Gables were devastated when a hurricane roared in off the ocean early in the morning of Sept. 18, 1926. It tossed large boats right up in the middle of the streets. It moved northwest through the Everglades and hit the town of Moore Haven, breaking the earthen levee protecting the town and nearly washed the town away. (Photo courtesy of South Florida Water Management District.)

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## Chapter 17

With phosphorus loadings into Lake Okeechobee leveling off at about 100 tons above the mandated target of 397 tons, water management specialists at South Florida Water Management District are looking at additional ways to reduce the phosphorus coming from four sub-basins north of the lake. These basins, termed "hot spots" have not been able in recent years to bring the phosphorus content in the runoff from these lands down to the mandated 1.2 ppm level.

The district completed a "Special Report on Phosphorus Loading to Lake Okeechobee," at the end of 1996, and while that report gives a history, current status, and sediment analysis of the various sub-basins, it also offers suggested programs which will address the hot spots, an isolated wetland restoration program and adopting a phosphorus budget for all land uses north of the lake.

Another report "Technical Assessment of Lake Okeechobee Basin Dairies," prepared by Soil and Water Engineering Technology, Inc. was a project co-sponsored by the district and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to assist farmers in controlling phosphorus discharges by identifying the sources of high phosphorus concentrations and provide possible solutions.

Site-specific strategies were developed for 10 sites that consistently had high concentrations of phosphorus. Currently, these dairies are implementing the majority of the recommendations, and reductions in phosphorus will be monitored through the district's biweekly sampling program.

Another project that has been initiated is a study program of the phosphorus-enriched sediments in tributaries. It is hoped the study will provide an accurate estimate of the amount of phosphorus reaching Lake Okeechobee that be attributed to tributary sediments, including tributaries ranging in size from field ditches to primary canals. It is important to determine the relative magnitude of phosphorus from these different tributary types.

Little is known about the location, areal extent, thickness, phosphorus content, mobility of the different phosphorus forms, and the over transportability of these sediments to the lake. Circumstances that cause movement of sediments are also unknown at this point. Collection and identification of this data is important for developing potential management options. This may also result in improved land use practices that reduce the build-up of organic sediments in wetlands, the

draft explains.

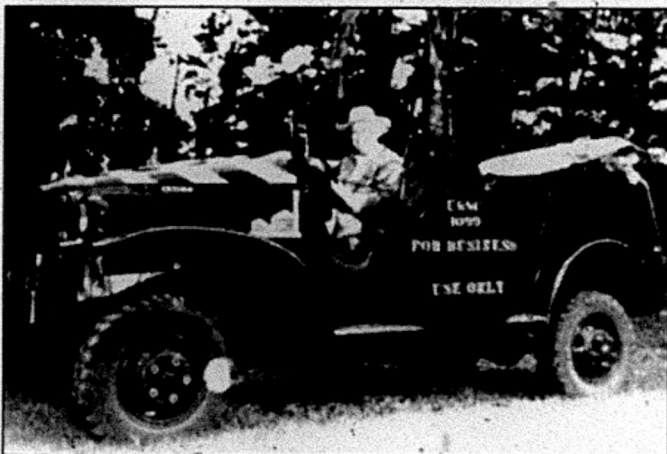
Another project is the development of an isolated wetland program for ranges north of Lake Okeechobee. It is estimated that between one-fifth and one-fourth of this area was originally wetlands. Approximately 37 percent of them have been ditched and drained.

Water managers have sought ways to trap nutrients in sediments so they will not go into the waterways feeding Lake Okeechobee.

One of these is a system at work on several dairy farms in Okeechobee County.

It was designed and installed by a company called Bion Technology and it uses direct filtration. They sheet flow this water through a wetland area after a precipitate has been added, a manmade wetland area. All of the precipitates settle out and the farmer can take 200 parts per million of phosphorus in water and reduce the phosphorus level down to 5 parts per billion.

Referring to the reason why more of the local dairies have not tried the Bion system, Mr. Williamson said they felt like they could comply with the Dairy Rule without it. Now the question remains what if the dairy farmers can't quite comply with the rule or they need to go to a lower concentration on the dairies, this might be a way for the farmers to get there.



Clarence Bitting, managed the United States Sugar Corporation during the first 15 years it was in business on the southwest shoreline of Lake Okeechobee at Clewiston.

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It is hoped that some of these experimental programs and the development of an isolated wetland program would help with a nutrient removal program between 25 and 80 percent, and would be long-term removal.

Restoration of the wetlands would restore wildlife habitat, as well the report suggests. These programs could be fostered by using incentives and facilitating landowner applications for funds from federal programs.

Phosphorus imports such as dairy cow feed and pasture fertilizer are the primary sources of phosphorus in the watershed. According to the report, total phosphorus imports in the northern watershed were estimated at 2,618 tons of phosphorus per year. According to a 1995 report, phosphorus exports in milk, cows and crops was estimated as 836 tons annually.

Although much of the nutrient content is retained in the uplands and wetland sediments, the imbalance between imports and exports continues to add to the build-up of phosphorus in the watershed scientists believe.

Scientists feel that a new phosphorus budget is needed to update the previous one done in 1995. That report was based on data collected between 1985 and 1989, and those figures were prior to the implementation of the current BMPs and nutrient management programs.

In the past in-lake phosphorus concentrations have displayed a dramatic pattern of historical change. During the 1970s, lake water concentrations of phosphorus nearly doubled.

However, when the external loads declined in recent years, there has been no significant change in the lake water phosphorus. This lack of

response by the in-lake phosphorus concentrations to load reductions reflects the high rate of internal phosphorus loading from the lake sediments.

For the 20-year period from 1973 to 1992, phosphorus loading rates to the lake have averaged near 570 tons per year. Outputs from the lake have averaged near 150 tons annually.

Consequently, there has been a net accumulation of about 460 tons per year of phosphorus in the lake's sediments, the report states.

Water management district governing board chairman Frank (Sonny) Williamson talked about this fact.

"Discussions before the board have always brought the explanation that with the huge lake and the huge amounts of phosphorus in the sediments from many years in the past, but

most notably in the last 30 years, those sediments have gone up in phosphorus. The hope for average in-lake phosphorus going down is going to be very slow. The slope is going to be very slow and over a period of many years. That has been the experience in other places with much smaller lakes" he said. "That downward trend within the lake, remember the incoming phosphorus each year is in the range of only 2 or 3 percent of the total phosphorus that is in the lake. The only way that phosphorus gets subtracted is that it flows out of the lake or it gets consolidated in bottom sediments. I guess there is a little bit of consolidated sediments happening, but not enough to be very dramatic," he explained.

"There may be another way to do that but nobody has got the nerve to try



This photo at Okee-Tantie Recreation Area on the Kissimmee River near where the river empties into Lake Okeechobee, provides an interesting photo with an interplay of shadow and light in the clouds and on the water. (Photo courtesy of Frank and Betty Williamson)



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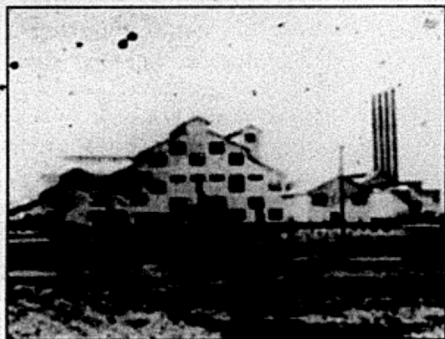
## Page 50 - Lady of Mystery

it and that is to use precipitates in the lake," he continued. "That would change those phosphorus compounds into non-reactive compounds and nobody wants to do that," he said.

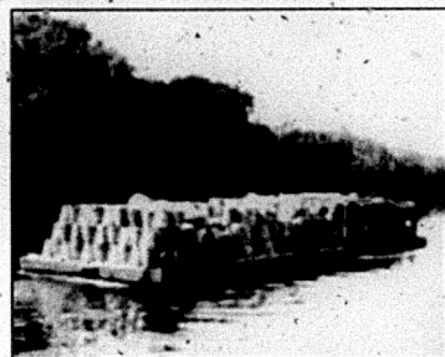
Has anything been proposed which would remove the sediments from the bottom of the lake?

Mr. Williamson said it is not economically feasible to try and pump that out.

"Some of it sits there in semi-suspension and then the waves whip it up.



This is a photo of the large sugar company during the years of its construction near Clewiston.



This is one of the boats that were used in the early days of this century to move crops to market. This load of potatoes were traveling from Browns Farm Road in Belle Glade to the railroad station located on the east shoreline of the lake in Pahokee.

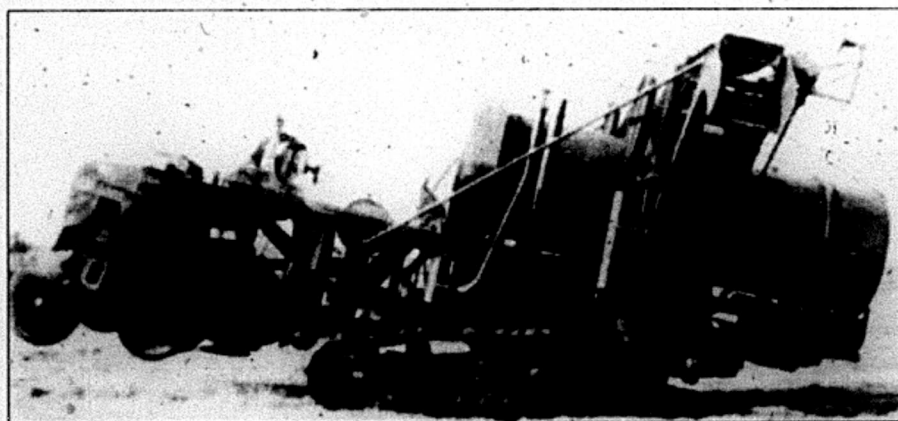
Way down underneath there is some consolidation that takes place and they call it consolidated sediments. That's the only process that removes phosphorus other than it flowing away from the lake," he said.

Mr. Williamson was asked that when he spoke about using the iron sulfate, or other chemicals, and if there is that concentration on the bottom, would there be some way to actually get down to that bottom concentration and inject the chemicals into the bottom.

"Everybody sees that as being too dangerous to contemplate. What if that precipitate stays so stable for so long? It's complicated and people are worried that if you tried to precipitate phosphorus out of the lake, you would create a monster that might come back later to haunt you. It's not something that you could measure all the potential danger from, to say it's worth all the risk that you would be taking. It's a little bit difficult so I don't think that will be considered any time soon," he explained.

The report also talks about the concentrations of chlorophyll a, which serve as an indicator of phytoplankton biomass in the lake waters, and the fact they display a historical trend that does not correspond, in any simple manner, with the trends in nutrient loads or in-lake concentrations. The average chlorophyll a concentrations show no significant response to changes in in-lake phosphorus or loading. Because phosphorus concentrations are more than ample for phytoplankton growth, it is turbidity, which limits light penetration and often prevents the formation of algal blooms.

The 1995 and 1996 seasonal in-lake phosphorus concentrations were compared to the maximum values for the previous five years. These data do not show any difference in the in-lake phosphorus patterns due to the 1995 wet season loading. In-lake phosphorus is most highly correlated with turbidity, which represents the re-suspension of sediments into the water column.



The Faulkner mechanical harvester was purchased by U.S. Sugar Corporation during the 1940s. The machines were not successful and were abandoned soon after purchase. Parts were subsequently utilized in continuous loaders.

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## Chapter 18

The Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades ecosystem is no doubt one of the most studied ecological systems in the world. State agencies, private organizations, international engineers, and federal agencies are all engaged in some type of study within this unique ecosystem.

An 11-member working group comprised of various federal agencies embarked on a five-year study of the

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration in September 1993. The group released its first annual report to a federal task force on the environment management to formulate and recommend policies, strategies, plans, programs and priorities for ecosystem restoration and management.

Areas to which the group has turned its attention include: water storage and delivery; agricultural run-off and water

quality contaminants issues.

Their findings include the statistics of how much man-made alteration has been done to the entire ecosystem to attain the desired drainage of wetlands earlier in the century. As a result, the system contains 990 miles of levees, 978 miles of canals and 30 pumping stations. These changes have altered the natural pattern of rainfall and evaporation, and the natural wet and dry



Photos of buildings and structures destroyed by the many hurricanes which have passed over central and south Florida remain grim reminders of the power of a hurricane. (Photo courtesy of the South Florida Water Management District)

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## Page 52 - Lady of Mystery cycles.

Because of the amount of land that has been drained, the remaining dry soil, organic and porous in nature, is oxidizing. This oxidation has reduced the depth of the soil thickness from 12 to 14 feet to 7 to 9 feet some 10 years ago. According to the report, the soil loss has slowed in the last 10 years, but it has had a far-reaching impact on the whole region.

The soil loss has caused a loss of elevation. That degree of incline, prior to drainage, helped to shift the water south, and it in turn supplied the farthest reaches of the entire system south of Lake Okeechobee. The water fed down through the sawgrass, soil and limestone and supplied the system's two aquifers, the Biscayne and the Florida. Today, the movement that the water makes is handled mechanically through an extensive system of levees and canals.

The soil loss has also diminished the water quality. As soil oxidation has decreased the depth of the soil, the less minerals and other components are retained in the remaining soil.

These waters flow on downstream accompanied by pesticides and assorted other run-off, and it is having adverse impacts on native plants and animals.

As native plants have been diminished, invasive non-native species such as Brazilian pepper, Australian pine and Melaleuca have found favorable growth conditions and have exploded their populations.

Natural fire was once a contributor to the habitat diversity. As a managed system, fire has been curtailed to a predictable schedule, and this has led to the disturbing of the burned and unburned areas which were necessary

for the habitat diversity. It has led to overdrained wetland areas and a reduction of those various types of areas which are necessary if the region is to maintain habitat diversity.

The most astounding by-product of the first year of study is the simple recognition of just how much has changed; and how much will have to be done (or undone) in order to come close to bringing back the ecosystem's natural components, also referred to as restoration. Efforts must be made in order to achieve sustainability, the report states.

In the entire south Florida area, the entire integrated system of water flow has been rearranged so that there are changes in soil composition, habitat, the identity and the populations of land and water species, and the relationship between fresh and salt water.

Without hydrologic restoration, nothing else will effectively be accomplished. Along with hydrologic restoration there needs to be an effort to curb the invasion of exotic non-native species, to eliminate the production of contaminants and stop the soil erosion and oxidation.

The agencies making up the working group include representatives of the National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Attorney's Office, National Marine Fisheries Service division of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Ocean Service division of NOAA, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Resources Conservation Service, and National Biological Service.

The working group was further subdivided into three groups on science, infrastructure and management.

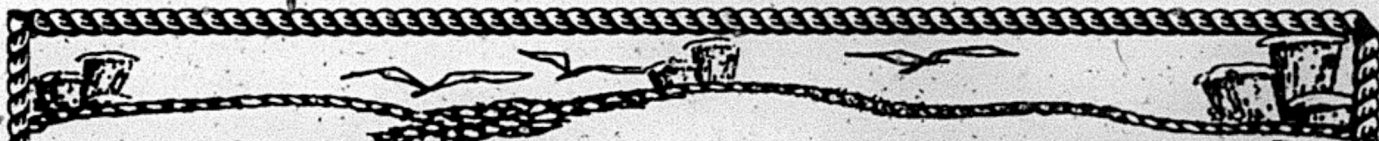
The federal task force intends to work with other local and state groups who have been involved in south Florida land and natural resource management issues. These groups include: Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida, the Man and the Biosphere program, the ecosystem management by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the work of the South Florida Water Management District.

What will a restored ecosystem look like? The summary report indicates that much of that would be difficult to determine during these earliest stages of the study and the process. The report states that certain benchmarks do exist by which the working group can start to determine the ecosystem restoration success.

There are three characteristics which gave the south Florida ecosystem resiliency and sustainability before any manmade changes were made. They were: dynamic storage and sheet flow; extent of the space covered by the ecosystem; and habitat variety. These characteristics will certainly be the future indicators of whether or not the restoration efforts are achieving success.

Habitat variety would be considered a success with increased native plant and animal diversity in the region. This could prove quite costly particularly when the estimated cost of removal of the Melaleuca tree is \$168 million and there is no way to measure the benefits from its removal, at this time.

Mercury contamination indicates ecosystem disruption. Therefore, its opposite, a reduction in mercury in large-mouth bass, alligators and panthers, would be indicative of a health indicator and therefore a success.



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Another indicator of success would be the re-establishment of the wading bird nesting colonies. Efforts in this direction are already under way in several south Florida areas. In the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, year-round water is bringing back the Florida kites and endangered hawks.

Other indicators of restoration success could include: reduction in the numbers of deformed fish in estuaries; increased seagrass cover; no further wetland losses; and, increased abundance of fish and species recovery.

While the efforts are still in their formative stages, no one can predict what form a restored ecosystem will take once complete. The size and complexity of the South Florida system, will leave scientists, engineers and water managers with a large number of challenges and unknowns.

Changes are already under way. The manner in which federal agencies do business in South Florida has been revamped. Agencies that, more or less, operated on their own have become aware of what their colleagues are doing, and now are working to avoid overlapping tasks. Increased communication is now taking place across agency lines, making it possible for restoration to proceed within an environment of mutual support.

The Interagency Task Force was not yet in a position in August 1995 to propose a comprehensive, fully integrated restoration plan for the South Florida ecosystem. During the past year, and in the coming years, tasks to accomplish such a restoration will need to be coordinated with state, local and tribal interests throughout the area. The Task Force, however, is able to outline and recommend a restoration vision for South Florida as well as management

objectives to support the vision. These objectives are being presented from the view and perspective of the federal community, the 11 federal agencies which comprise the Task Force.

It is also in a position to recommend steps the federal community can take to reinforce existing restoration efforts and to initiate new efforts.

The Task Force has adopted nine priorities to carry out. They will also review and evaluate other priorities.

1. Provide consolidated federal objectives on ecosystem restoration to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' reconnaissance study for the redesign of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project (C&SF) and continue to provide timely support.

2. Establish research priorities and implement a process for coordinating research on the South Florida ecosystem, including Florida Bay, which includes development of a base line scientific condition assessment and indicator monitoring program, and appropriate biological and hydrological modeling to evaluate ecosystem restoration objectives and programs.

3. Establish partnerships with the state and local agencies to support land acquisition initiatives in the South Florida ecosystem.

4. Support development of an effort to integrate actions essential for the recovery of threatened and endangered species, and undertake a multi-species recovery plan with the south Florida ecosystem restoration program.

5. Support expedited implementation of Corps projects in the Everglades ecosystem including Shark Slough, C-111 and the Kissimmee River.

6. Support development of a comprehensive wetlands permit mitigation strategy for south Florida that furthers

## Lady of Mystery - Page 57 ecosystem restoration.

7. Develop an integrated, long-term proposal and budget for ecosystem restoration, maintenance and protection detailing current activities, achievements and project accomplishments.

8. Implement a continuing process that identifies and integrates immediate management goals, priority projects, and funding needs for the South Florida ecosystem.

9. Fully integrate the state and South Florida Water Management District into the task force and build partnerships with appropriate local and tribal governments.

10. Facilitate implementation of the Everglades Forever Act.

The Environmental Protection Agency issued a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit for the Everglades Nutrient Removal Project, the first of several stormwater treatment areas to be built.

The Task Force lists eight tasks remaining to be accomplished in 1997 and 1998. They include:

a) Finalize, adopt and begin implementation of a federal Everglades Forever Act program management plan.

b) Complete federal programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

c) Specifically begin work on Stormwater Treatment Area 1E.

d) Continue threshold/nutrient dosing research to provide basis for setting final water quality standard.

e) Continue permitting for additional stormwater treatment area discharges.

f) Support development and implementation of emergency interim plan for Florida Bay.

g) Establish an Everglades Agricultural Area office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and provide technical assistance to private



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## Page 54 - Lady of Mystery

landowners in the EAA and the C-139 Basin, encouraging implementation of best management practices to reduce phosphorus loadings from farm runoff.

h) Continue mercury research and monitoring.

11. Support program to eradicate invasive exotics, particularly *Melaleuca* (Australian Paperbark), *Casurina* (Australian Pine), and *Schinus* (Brazilian Pepper).

They have obtained funds to build the Fort Lauderdale quarantine research facility. They have executed a partnership agreement to restore 5,000 acres of Brazilian pepper-infested land in Everglades National Park.

The Task Force has defined two tasks. They are:

- a) Seek expanded eradication funding.
- b) Develop a comprehensive control plan.

The summary concludes, "Substitute 'south Florida' for 'Everglades,' and we are given the promise of restoration—of a region, vast, magnificent, subtle and unique, not fragmented into its natural and cultural identities but integrated in such a way that the restored south Florida ecosystem becomes the bedrock from which an integrated, sustainable future springs.



There were so many bodies along the east and south shores of Lake Okeechobee that this large funeral pyre was necessary to dispose of the remains in an attempt to keep diseases from spreading. A secondary problem was there were not enough people remaining who were able to bury the dead. (Photo courtesy the Belle Glade Sun)

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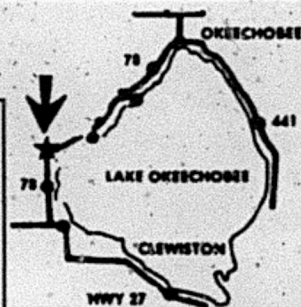
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## Chapter 19

Plans and engineering for the restoration of the Kissimmee River have been delayed for a period of time. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers took longer than expected to finalize their designs for the construction of the massive restoration effort.

Current plans call for construction to begin in the upper chain of lakes in 1999. This project will raise the levels in some of the lakes in Osceola County. At the present, this restoration is scheduled to displace 47 homeowners.

The connecting canals between the lakes of Hatchineha and Kissimmee and Lake Cypress and Hatchineha will be expanded. That will help the flow down into Lake Kissimmee, officials from the South Florida Water Management District claim.

The structure that is called S-65 and which is located at State Road 60 where Lake Kissimmee empties into the Kissimmee River will also be expanded to get the flow of water out of Lake Kissimmee and into the valley.

According to Patricia Strayer, the water management district's project engineer, the effects of the headwaters revitalization project will not extend north of Lake Cypress. That is the one constraint the district has kept in mind during several years of studies on this phase of the restoration project.

She said that she wanted to point out that the flood control construction measures will take place first. Then, the lake regulation schedule implementation would take place second and the backfilling in the lower basin would take place after flood control modifications have been made.

Back in 1994, the Corps and the district constructed a test plug on the Kissimmee River. The test plug was a joint venture of the Corps and the district and was being done to see if the proposed method of backfilling of 22 miles of the Kissimmee River was practical to do. Its purpose was to evaluate various construction methods, assess the equipment that is being proposed for use, collect geotechnical data and provide post-construction analysis.

Approximately 166,500 cubic yards of fill from the adjacent spoil piles were placed into the C-38 waterway to form a 1,000-foot plug in the canal.

Test filling began at a location approximately 4,450 feet upstream of Lock S-65B located near Lorida and extends about 1,000 feet upstream.

By May 1994, The C-38 canal was no longer a 56-mile long free-flowing

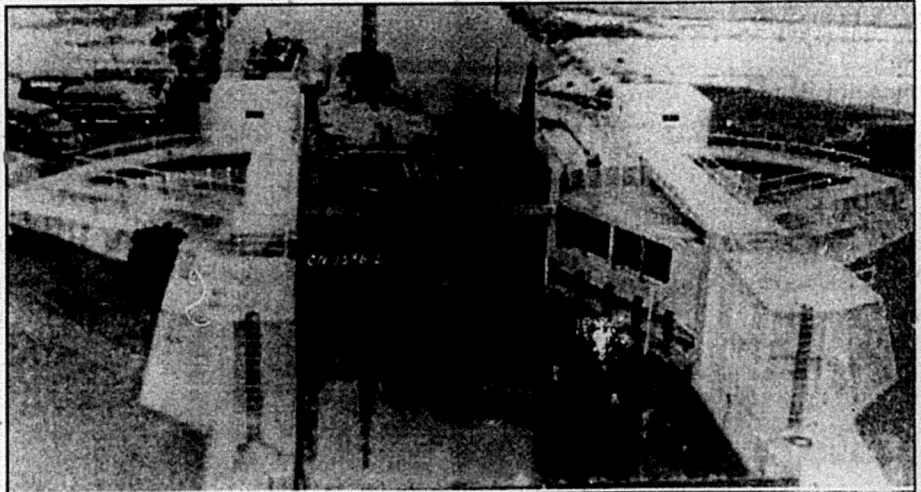
channel. The project was completed in August that year.

The plug forced water in the channel back into the old traditional oxbows that once were the main channels of the river. Removing the spoil for the fill for the test plug, lowered 13 acres along what was once floodplain so the wetlands could be restored.

In the past four years, the river has carved its own path through the test plug, which is often covered by water during rainy periods and high waters.

Aquatic plants can now be found near the plug that did not exist four years ago. Water now flows through the original oxbows. Where the waters were once still and stagnant, there is now a continuous flow.

When the backfilling of the river begins in two years, the project will restore some 22 miles of old river channel, as well as some 19,000 acres



Periodic work, maintenance and repair are done of the storm gates located all around the perimeter of Lake Okeechobee's Herbert Hoover Dike.



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## Page 56 - Lady of Mystery

of wetlands. Native vegetation should return and it is hoped that some of the former birds that once inhabited the valley will return.

Restoration is not just a matter of pushing the spoil banks back into the canal channel. Some new sections of river channel will have to be dug where the original river was filled in and cut off during the original channelization some 30 years ago.

However, it is doubtful that the migratory ducks, long touted by many environmentalists, will return, since they disappeared from the Kissimmee Valley in the 1950s, long before channelization of the canal began in the 1960s.

Including the first flood control structure at State Road 60, C-65, all the way to S-65-E, located about one mile south of State Road 70 West, there are seven structures, the primary purpose of which is to control water flow from Kissimmee to Okeechobee. Two of those structures, S-65-B and S-65-C, located near Lorida and Cornwell in Highlands County, will be removed to permit re-flooding of the floodplain.

Under the current revised time line, the project, scheduled to get under way in 1999, will be completed around 2010. The latest figures on the estimated cost of the restoration effort is about \$414 million, according to John Neuharth from the office of government and public affairs in the water management district.

### Riverwoods Field Laboratory

Continuing studies are ongoing up and down the Kissimmee River Valley by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and by the Riverwoods Field Laboratory. The site is located on the Kissimmee River in Highlands County on a 15-acre site,

just off U.S. Highway 98 North.

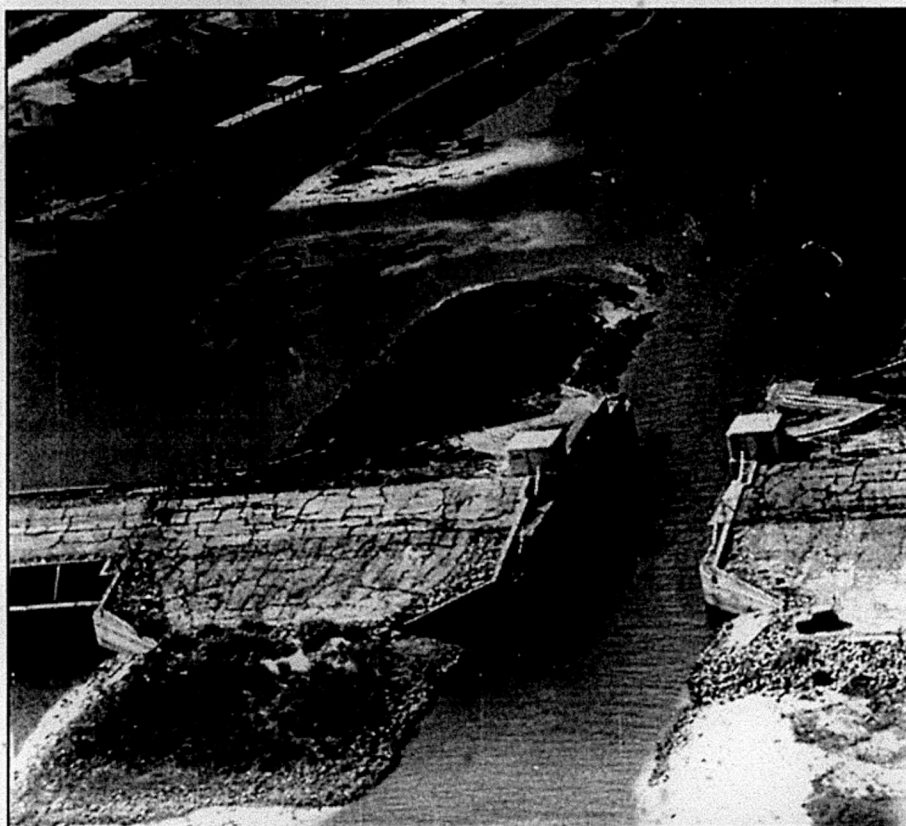
A variety of programs covering every aspect of the ecosystem along the Kissimmee River and adjacent land areas are being studied and researched. These include: nutrient cycling, nitrogen and phosphorus limitation, vascular hydrophyte and associated periphyton communities, macroinvertebrate populations.

Studies are being conducted on fish, amphibians, reptiles and bird populations both in the Kissimmee River Valley and Lake Okeechobee.

Water quality projects in both the valley, on the river and in the lake are also being conducted by the scientists at Riverwoods.

A large part of the work at the laboratory will be devoted to education. They will conduct two and three-day workshops on environmental topics and classes will consist of local, regional and national educational institutions.

Graduate thesis candidates needing to do research from the various Florida colleges and universities will find the



Taylor Creek Locks on the eastern shoreline of the lake is one of the busiest access points to Lake Okeechobee. This photo from the *Okeechobee News* archives was probably taken in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy of the *Okeechobee News*)

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doors and facilities open to them. The laboratory is co-sponsoring these students through agreements with the student's home institution and a district staff person.

Coordination of the programs is being handled through the Florida Center for Environmental Studies,

located on the North Campus of Florida Atlantic University.

Current research and studies are expected to continue at the site for the next 10 to 12 years.

#### **Everglades Agricultural Area and the Everglades**

With the passage of the Everglades

Forever Act in 1994, farming interests in the Everglades Agricultural Area, which comprises about one-half million acres, south of Lake Okeechobee agreed to levy a tax that would help pay for the cost of reducing the nutrients in the runoff from their farming interests, primarily sugar cane. The



Before mechanical harvesting of sugar cane became the normal harvesting method, nearly 10,000 cane cutters were imported annually from the off-shore islands in the Caribbean. Approximately 55 cutters worked in a single field. (Photo courtesy of the Belle Glade Sun.)



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farmers are to be rewarded for their efforts, and success would mean a reduction in the tax. As a result, it is estimated the farmers in the EAA will contribute about \$322 million toward the "clean-up" over the next few years.

Estimates of the total cost to complete the Everglades projects has been estimate as high as \$600 million-plus. The South Florida Water Management District is estimating the cost of land acquisition, design, construction and interest costs for loans at \$517 million.

The first phase of the efforts to improve the water quality flowing south from the lake, through the EAA, and into the Everglades calls for the construction of six man-made marshes which will total some 66 square miles. The goal of the marshes is to filter out the nutrients, phosphorus and nitrogen, from the farm drainage, as well as from urban drainage, which currently flows southward into the Everglades.

Bids were awarded in July 1997 for the first phase of wetland/marsh construction. First awarded to International Technology Corp. of Pittsburgh, that bid was withdrawn because the company did not intend to use more than 4 percent of its subcontractors from women or minority owned businesses.

The district then divided the project with \$18.3 million going to the Harry Pepper & Associates of Jacksonville to construct a 6,870-acre marsh on former farmland just west of 20-Mile Bend in western Palm Beach County.

The second project has been awarded to Bergeron Land Development, a Broward County firm that will receive \$24.6 million to construct a 6,430-acre marsh in south-central Palm Beach County.

Meanwhile, the farmers in the EAA

have now recorded two years of success in reducing the amount of phosphorus in the groundwater runoff from their fields. The Everglades Forever Act calls for an annual reduction of 25 percent of the phosphorus content, and according to reports from the scientists at the South Florida Water Management District, the farmers are exceeding that goal. In fact they have reduced the phosphorus content in

their runoff water by 52 percent according to the latest report from the water management district.

In the fall of 1996, a group of environmentalists, headed by Orlando's Mary Barley, had three constitutional amendments placed on the ballot to attempt to force the sugar farmers to pay a larger share of the Everglades cleanup.

The primary amendment that would



Cane cutters take a break from the hard work of harvesting sugar cane by hand, and seek a shady spot beneath the very canes they are harvesting. (Photo courtesy of the Belle Glade Sun.)

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have added a penny tax to raw sugar was defeated. A second amendment, Amendment 5, passed and essentially stated, "Let the polluter pay."

Innumerable questions regarding the meaning and effects of this amendment have risen on both sides of the issue. As a result, the courts have been asked to decide and interpret the meaning of this constitutional amendment.

During an interview in May 1997, district governing board chairman Frank (Sonny) Williamson commented on this amendment and its possible outcomes.

He said that the court has been asked to rule on two questions. Is Amendment 5 self-executing? If they say, yes it is, then they will be saying that because Amendment 5 gives that responsibility to the South Florida Water Management District, they will be saying to the district, "Go forth and enforce Amendment 5 without any further instructions from the Legislature. You don't need any law. There's enough law there."

Then, it would be up to the district then to interpret who the polluters are, he said. Legally, he said, a farmer can maintain if they have a permit to discharge in this state, they are not a polluter. That's another legal question.

The other question the court has been asked is, Amendment 5 says the polluter shall be primarily responsible for the costs of abatement of their pollution. What does primarily responsible mean? Does it mean 51 percent, 75 percent, 100 percent, all of their costs, or some portion of their costs? This is a legal term that could be interpreted, and has been interpreted to be just a majority of the costs, not a majority of all the costs, but the majority of the

costs associated with the EAA pollution, farm by farm.

If the court says it's self-executing and primarily responsible for means at least 90 percent or more, Mr. Williamson said, that will leave the water management district a lot of decisions that are very tough.

What is a polluter? Is hydroperiod restoration a part of pollution and should the costs of that be borne by the farmers, he said. He said there are probably another 8 or 10 real sticky questions that need to be defined by the district, if they are told it's self-executing.

If the supreme court says it's not self-executing, then the Legislature will need to take the spirit of that constitutional statement and enact some laws which say this is the way it's going to be done, Mr. Williamson said.

He said as soon as the district makes some decisions about how that should be perceived, they will be immediately sued. He said the district will be going into a period of litigation and he questions if that will be good for the Everglades.

He said that he doesn't think decisions on Amendment 5 will affect the agriculture interests north of our Lady. He said that is fairly clear that too much phosphorus is going into Lake Okeechobee from north of the lake.

He noted that a lot of the ranches and dairymen are active in trying to address those problems of how to have less and less phosphorus leaving the lands north of the lake. He said that is an issue that will need a lot of attention into the future.

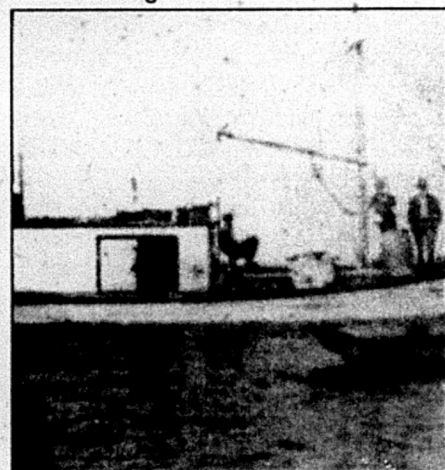
One of the questions that the farmers in the Everglades Agricultural

## Lady of Mystery - Page 59

Area have raised, he noted is the phosphorus they get from Lake Okeechobee coming on to their farms is not phosphorus they should be responsible for. That's a good position. They shouldn't be. When you define pollution in the EAA, you need to subtract phosphorus that has come in from the north, he said.

Basically, the farmers in the EAA feel they are doing more than their fair share because the water they are receiving is "dirtier" than what they are delivering further south in the Everglades proper, noted Missy Barletto, public information officer in the district's Okeechobee Service Center.

In fact, according to Ms. Barletto, if the agricultural interests north of the lake don't reduce the amount of phosphorus they are contributing to the waters of Lake Okeechobee, they could, unfortunately, find the regulatory spotlight turned back on them as it was during the 1980s.



Boats around Lake Okeechobee were as numerous for that population as passenger cars and pickup trucks are today.

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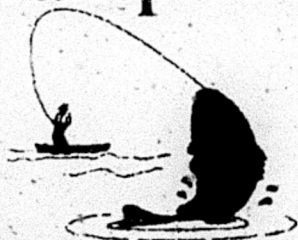
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## Chapter 20

What about our lady of mystery as we move into a new century, as well as a new awareness of just how fragile she may be? Can she remain the liquid heart of Florida in view of all the use and abuse that man has heaped into her waters in the last 100 years?

With the publication this fall of the updated version of the 1997 Lake Okechobee Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan, past efforts to lower the nutrient levels in our lady with the shimmering skirts will continue to be monitored.

Programs that have been implemented in the to achieve this 397-ton phosphorus goal include the Works of the District regulatory program, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Dairy Rule, and the research and monitoring programs coordinated by the district. Through these programs, the excess phosphorus loadings to the lake have been greatly reduced, but they have not met the target goal specified by the state in the original legislation. At the present, there is still over 100 tons per year being put into the Lake beyond the mandated goal.

Another major goal in the SWIM Plan is to protect the lake's marsh zone from excessive flooding, drought and the proliferation of exotic plants. The marsh zone occupies about 25 percent of the lake's surface, and is used by spawning fish, nesting and feeding wading birds and habitat for threatened and endangered species like the snail kite.

Marsh zones and their inhabitants are usually adaptable to extreme conditions of wet and dry, the long-term flooding can have adverse impacts on plants, fish, birds and other wildlife. Research is being conducted to determine the effect of lake

stages on plant communities and the lake regulation schedule is being examined to develop a more environmentally friendly alternative. The second aspect of the marsh zone concerns the rapid expansion of exotic plants into the marsh. At least 14 exotic plant species have been found and five of those have become a major threat to the ecosystem as they expand into areas formerly occupied by native species.

Water management district officials are addressing the many complex functions for which the lake is used. These include: Agricultural water use; recreational use; Everglades water supply; navigation; urban and industrial water use; prevent salt water intrusion; protect fish and wildlife; flood protection; and, estuary protection.

These competing interests only serve to make the problems with the lady with the shimmering skirts harder to resolve to everyone's satisfaction.

District officials are currently developing improved pasture best management practices. One project on which the research and development division is working is on tributary sediments. This study was started in the summer of 1996, according to Dr. Barry Rosen, the district's program manager for the Lake Okechobee SWIM Plan. He said what they are trying to analyze and measure is if there is a large sediment load, with an accompanying large amount of phosphorus with it that is flowing into the lake. They also wanted to find out how much is already in the tributaries.

"There is something very interesting that we found out. We looked at eight basins and did 25 sampling sites and we found 800 tons of phosphorus in the eight basin-area, in the upper layer. It's a fluidized mud that we feel might have had a

significant effect on the loading to the lake," he said.

In the second phase of the study, they will do a more detailed analysis and focus in to see what it will really take to remove that phosphorus and develop some management strategies.

He said that it might be a great opportunity to clean those ditches out and possibly reduce the phosphorus entering the lake by 10 percent.

Other new programs to reduce the phosphorus and nitrogen will be evaluated and possibly implemented.

According to Missie Barletto, they would like to see the formation of a citizen-based, community based initiative to work on further reducing the phosphorus loadings to the lake from the northern and northeastern basins.

At the present time she said there are 125 parcels of land in those basins which remain out of compliance in meeting phosphorus goals. If all those are brought into compliance, that will reduce the phosphorus loadings to the lake by only 30 tons annually. That leaves yet another 70 tons to reduce to meet the mandated target of 397 tons annually.

A number of possible voluntary projects are being discussed, none of which are extremely costly, as compared to the BMPs required of the dairies several years ago.

Cleaning of the ditches on farms and ranches to remove nutrient-laden sediments is one of these types of programs being discussed. Still remaining with the ditches, Ms. Barletto said that turning ditches into swales is another possible way of slowing down the water and giving the sediments an opportunity to settle out of the water column.



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On many farms and ranches throughout the state, isolated wetlands were ditched and drained to provide more pasture areas. Now, land owners are being requested to consider re-isolating those wetlands, as yet another method of holding the water on the land until the nutrient sediments settle out, so they don't flow into the lake.

Ms. Barletto said that there is about \$15 million in Critical Projects Funds to assist landowners who participate in these experimental projects.

Under the present plan, the water management district will match funds with the landowner. In most cases, the landowners' match will be the value of the land.

Some of the other proposed plans detailed within the updated version of the Lake Okeechobee SWIM Plan include:

The development of Pollutant Load Reduction Goals (PLRGs) for SWIM water bodies; a methodology for developing and implementing programs that can be applied all across the state in a consistent manner.

PLRGs are defined as targeted reductions in pollutant loadings to a water body needed to achieve watershed management goals.

The methodology proposed for developing PLRGs is a six-step process. Those steps are:

- Define the water quality targets (desired conditions).
- Establish (estimate) the allowable loadings.
- Quantify existing storm water and point source loadings.
- Determine (estimate) load reductions needed.
- Implement watershed management strategies.
- Monitor and evaluate progress.

Water, both its quantity and its quality are becoming more important each day to Florida. The environmentally sensitive Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades ecosystem

## Lady of Mystery - Page 61

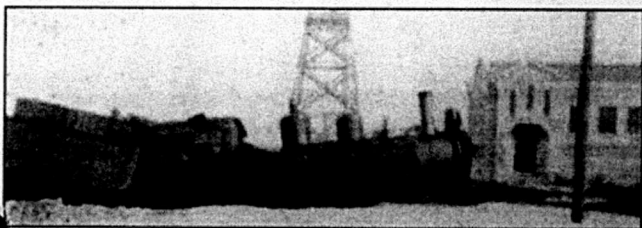
has been under close study and legislative rules in an effort to maintain and restore the system to its natural state.

While the explosion of newcomers to the southern part of the state along the coastlines has taken a toll on water demands, agricultural interests from the town of Kissimmee to southern Dade county have born the brunt of the accusation for polluting the waters of the ecosystem.

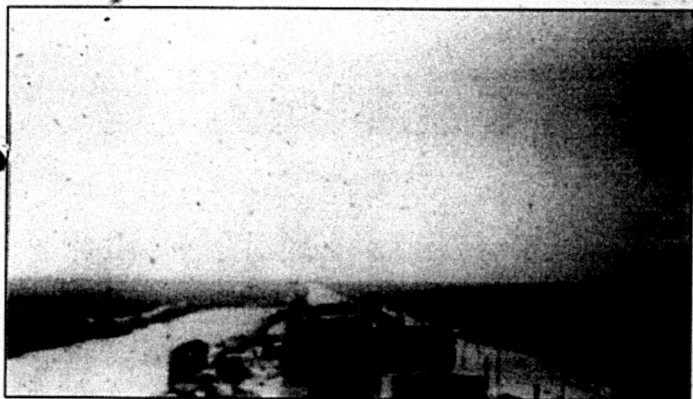
Powerful coalitions of environmental groups pull in yet another direction demanding the area be restored and maintained for the benefit of the fish and wildlife.

The one point that continues to be emphasized by the special interest groups on all sides of the issue to protect this lady of mystery and that is the fact that there needs to be cooperation and not confrontation. Farmers, ranchers, water managers, scientists, environmentalists and recreational interests need to join together to arrive at equitable solutions that will keep America's second largest freshwater lake the unique water body that she is.

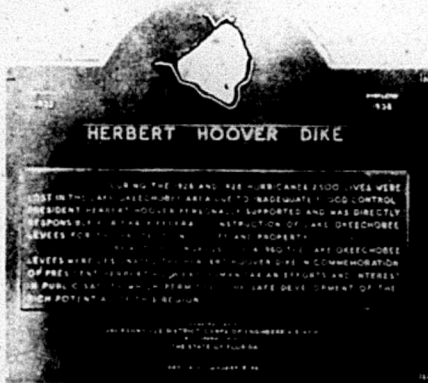
To repeat the very significant quote from Florida Game and Freshwater Fish biologist Don Fox, back in 1991: "If it had been easy, it would have been dealt with a long time ago."



This photo of a locomotive collapsing under the undermined railroad bed was donated by George Heinz uncle to Jack Davis.



Following the 1926 hurricane, heavy flooding occurred in the Industrial Canal in Clewiston.



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This flood control structure, located in Buckhead Ridge in Glades County, is shown during its construction in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy the Okeechobee News)

### Acknowledgements

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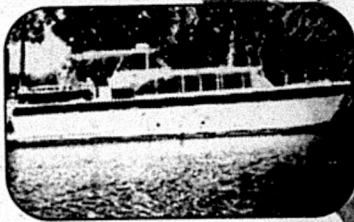
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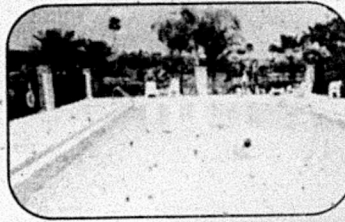
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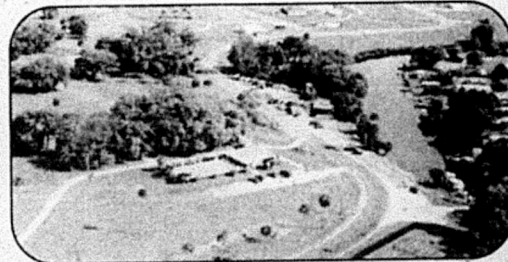
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*Ribbon Cutting in 1991*

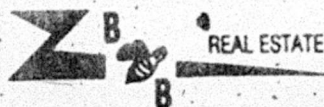


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